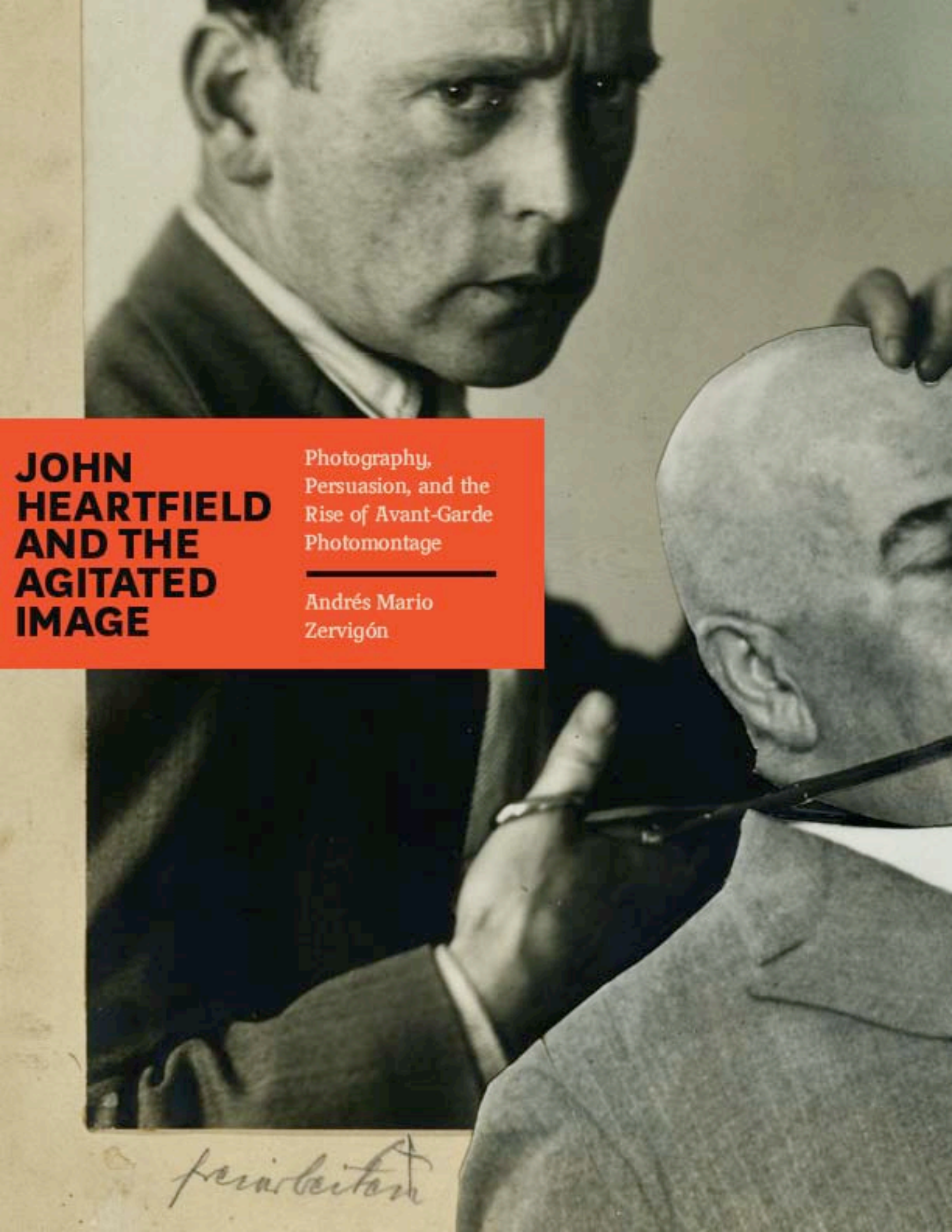


JOHN HEARTFIELD AND THE AGITATED IMAGE

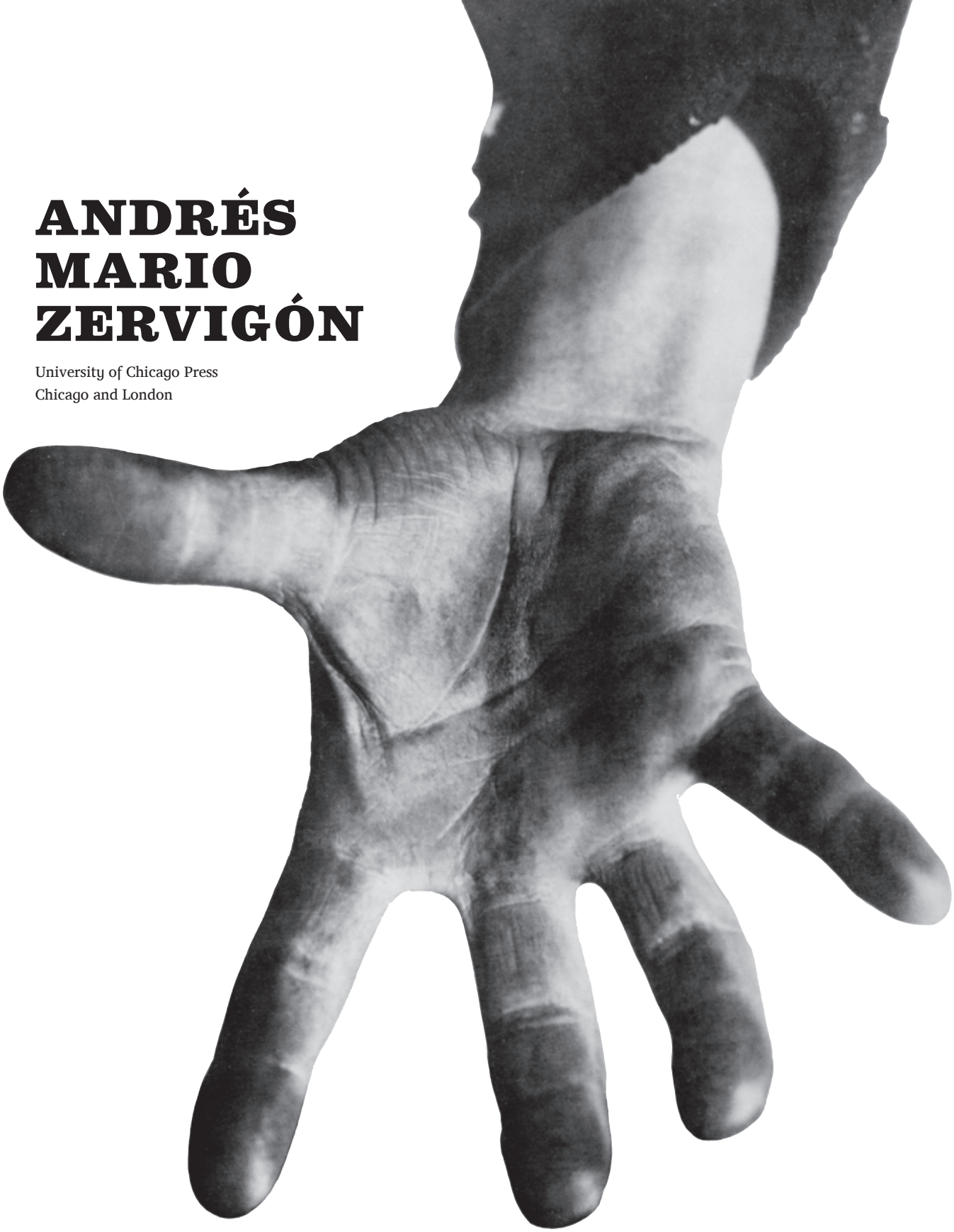
Photography, Persuasion, and the Rise of Avant-Garde Photomontage

Andrés Mario Zervigón

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FOR JOSÉ NUÑO-GARCÍA

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AN ACADEMIC INVESTIGATION SUCH AS THIS ONE RESTS HEAVILY ON THE GENEROUS helping hands of collaborators, colleagues, friends, and funders, and—less reliably—on a chance succession of opportunities, documents, and flash realizations. This book began when the magnanimous and the serendipitous met. Throughout my college and graduate school years, I had been fascinated by the mix of art and politics plied by John Heartfield's photomontages and the curious alchemy of image and text generating their power. In April 2002 I gave a Work in Progress talk at Los Angeles' Getty Research Institute (GRI) and took a first stab at addressing these enigmas. In advance of my talk, Marcia Reed, the GRI's head of collection development, told me of the vast amount of Heartfield material she had laboriously amassed over the preceding years. In the ensuing discussion, Marcia kindly proposed that we display some of the artist's book covers and magazine compositions for the talk's audience. Time constraints ultimately precluded such a viewing, but I suggested an alternative: that I curate an exhibition from this material. In 2004 she and her colleagues accepted my proposal to do just that. This book is the result of seven years of research, which began with my extended preparation for and staging—as guest curator—of *Agitated Images: John Heartfield and German Photomontage, 1920–1938* (Getty Research Institute, February 21–June 25, 2006; Wolfsonian Museum, September 21, 2007–February 10, 2008). I warmly thank Marcia Reed, Gail Feigenbaum, Barbara Anderson, Nancy Perloff, and Tom Crow for investing their trust in me and making this tremendous research and exhibition opportunity possible. I am also indebted to the dedicated work of Isotta Poggi, whose experience in exhibitions proved essential to the show's success; Karen Lanzoni, who made the GRI's Special Collections mate-

rial fully accessible; and the Wolfsonian Museum's director, Marianne Lamonaca, who helped replicate the exhibition's Los Angeles success in Miami Beach.

In these same years, friends and colleagues in a Los Angeles–based reading group pored over the materials and early chapter drafts I wrote while preparing the exhibition. I thank Amy Lyford, Charlotte Eyerman, and Lisa Foreman Cody for their expert support and sharp eyes. In 2006 Juliet Koss, Andrew Perchuk, and Katja Zelljadt helped me organize the symposium "Radical Politics/Radical Aesthetics" at the GRI to accompany and digest the exhibition. Their intellectual contributions proved important for these pages. It was during the symposium that two of its participants, Maria Gough and Andreas Huyssen, began providing extraordinary feedback on what would ultimately become this book. Professor Gough read early drafts of two chapters and, just as importantly, offered warm and cheerful support as a good friend. Chapter 4 in particular rests heavily on her counsel. Professor Huyssen published an earlier version of this same chapter in *New German Critique* and has since become an extremely helpful interlocutor on photography's history and theory, particularly within the German context. Along the way, Anne McCauley offered a spirited exchange on similar subjects, with sharp observations and smiling comradeship.

The essential tools I brought to this project come from my graduate study. In those years, Norman Bryson offered key lessons on how to read, look, and think conceptually. I thank him warmly for his ongoing support and help. Benjamin Buchloh provided the critical terms of debate for a reconsideration of the historical avant-garde, and Yve-Alain Bois taught me to look at an object and consider how it makes meaning with elements of visual signification and strategies that purposefully bypass an artist's compositional skills. A cadre of endlessly sharp student colleagues (and now professional comrades) helped amplify and process these lessons: Stephen Nelson, Elizabeth Mansfield, Anne McClanan, Aileen Tsui, Graham Bader, Matthew Simms, Christine Mehring, Lisa Pon, Harry Cooper, and most especially Anthony White.

With the opening of the Getty exhibition, I began a sixteen-month residence in Berlin, where I continued the research I had begun in the GRI's Special Collections. Long conversations with Michael Krejsa, director of the Archive of Pictorial Arts at Berlin's Academy of Art, proved essential, as did his help in securing a study visa for my time in the capital. Peter Zimmermann and Anita Metelka, also of the Archive, provided friendly assistance with the institution's vast materials and the images for this book. While in Berlin, I had the good fortune to meet Hanne Bergius through a shared friend, Rena Kahle. As Germany's primary authority on Berlin Dada, Professor Bergius offered indescribably useful help in navigating the fascinating but tricky avant-garde terrain on which Heartfield's work matured. She remains a dear friend to whom this book is deeply indebted. Freya Mülhaupt of the Berlinische Galerie offered her expert knowledge on the Weimar era's art and photography, while Sven Reichardt of the University of Konstanz shared his mastery of interwar German history, all with warm amity.

While in Berlin, I benefited from long conversations with Sabine Kriebel of University College Cork, Ireland. Professor Kriebel and I had met after a 2004 College Art Association conference talk she delivered on Heartfield, brilliantly reworked from her 2003 dissertation, "Revolutionary Beauty." We quickly recognized that we approach this photomontage artist with similar questions and, just as felicitously, that she works on the latter portion of his career and I on the earlier. Like me, she has spent extended periods of time in Berlin researching its archives. This allowed us many occasions to talk about and pore over materials together. Her insights and help have been essential to this book's development, as has her cheerful and nourishing friendship. Her forthcoming study begins where this one ends.

At the University of La Verne, where I was teaching at this project's inception, Art and Art History Department chair Ruth Trotter offered me extremely generous liberty to combine instructional obligations with research time. She also became a dear and supportive friend. In my years at the institution, La Verne awarded me a faculty grant, a research grant, and a summer research grant, all of which helped rear this project at its early stages. In addition to thanking Professor Trotter, I thank my other colleagues at La Verne for their intellectual contributions and friendship: Dion Johnson, Keith Lord, Gary Colby, Jonathan Reed, Andrea Labinger, Kathleen Lamkin, John Gingrich, Fred Yaffe, James Le Sueur (now University of Nebraska), and Stephen Westbrook (now California State University Fullerton).

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The study's central engagement with photography was significantly cultivated by a years-long exchange with my Rutgers colleague and compadre Tanya Sheehan. She and I transformed this dialogue into the Developing Room, an academic working group that we cofounded in 2007 at the Rutgers University Center for Cultural Analysis. I would single out our symposium "Photography and Radical Politics," which contributed substantially to the conceptual structure of this book, particularly in the talks delivered by Matthew Witkovsky (Art Institute of Chicago) and Devin Fore (Princeton University). My conversations and warm friendship with Professor Sheehan continue to inform my approach to photography. Our institutional relationship

with the Toronto Photography Seminar and its ongoing project "Photography and the Transnational Politics of Affect" have also strongly shaped this book's analysis.

Lilian Grosz who, along with her brother-in-law Martin Grosz, heads the Estate of George Grosz, kindly granted this book permission to print her father-in-law's images. Over a number of lunches and cups of coffee, she told me of the estate's development and the Grosz family's postwar history. Lilian is a strong advocate for George Grosz's art. John Heartfield's descendants have been equally gracious. His grandsons John Heartfield and Bob Sondermeijer generously offered blanket publication permission for this tome's Heartfield images. John, moreover, has traveled numerous times to Rutgers, where, together, we have sifted through the many photographs and documents collected by his father, Tom. The younger Heartfield has now set up an online archive of this exciting material at http://www.johnheartfield.com.

I would particularly like to stress the unwavering support that the University of Chicago Press has given this book. I cannot thank my editor, Susan Bielstein, enough for the enthusiasm she has demonstrated for this project from our very first meeting, and for her selection of two extraordinary reviewers, whose suggestions, along with her own, substantially improved my manuscript. Illustrations editor Anthony Burton cheerfully managed the mountain of images and objects I sent him from New York, while Joel Score brilliantly edited my equally voluminous text.

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Finally, I wish to express deep gratitude for those closest to me. My mother, Mary, has always encouraged and supported my education, not even flinching when I effectively decided never to leave university. My father, Luis, and stepmother, Beverly, gush lovingly over my ongoing engagements, and my entire family has stoically acceded to shortened visits home or canceled trips due to that ever-present but abstract entity: the book. I leave these last words of acknowledgment for my beloved husband, José Nuño-García, to whom I dedicate this book. In our twenty-one years together, he has shown unlimited faith in me and offered the most nourishing encouragement possible, even when this project stole time we could have otherwise spent exploring hidden corners of Boston, Berlin, Santander, Madrid, Los Angeles, and New York. I thank him with the embrace made by the covers of this book.

INTRODUCTION

JOHN HEARTFIELD (BORN HELMUT HERZFELD, 1891–1968) WAS A PIONEER OF modern photomontage. Working in Germany and Czechoslovakia between the two world wars, he developed a novel method of appropriating and reusing photographs to powerful political effect. The strength of his assembled images, which one contemporary compared to dynamite, lay in their capacity to utterly transform the meaning of the photographs from which they were made (figs. I.1 and I.2). According to Heartfield, his work simply disclosed the "truth" obscured by the mainstream press and by the propaganda of his political opponents. In pursuing this goal of unveiling, he often concentrated his efforts on photographs that had appeared in the illustrated press and had thus already played a role in shaping public perception. Heartfield essentially placed himself before Germany's visual culture like a prosecutor with scissors (figs. I.3 and I.4), doggedly slicing through images that asserted a reality he judged to be false. Appearing in magazine spreads, campaign posters, and book covers, his litigious visions sought to reshape public perception by challenging the photographs that helped form it. His images may not have fully impressed German consciousness with the critical vision they advocated, despite their broad dissemination. But their impact transformed photomontage from a vehicle of avant-garde art and advertising into a broadly useful mode of visual communication.

This book is about Heartfield's development as a photomontage artist and the stunning power of his images. As the following chapters wish to assert, however, his achievement lies at a more fundamental level than his famous practice of appropriation and juxtaposition might suggest. His ultimate desire was not just to





Fig. I.1 (left)
John Heartfield, *Adolf, der Übermensch: Schluckt Gold und redet Blech* (*Adolf the Superman: Swallows Gold and Spouts Tin*), *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* 11, no. 29 (July 17, 1932): 675. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (87-S194). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Fig. I.2 (right)
Hitler at a rally in the Lustgarten in Berlin, April 4, 1932. Stefan Lorant Collection. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (920024). © J. Paul Getty Trust.

force individual photographs to tell the truth that he felt they had occluded; his goal was to reinvent photographic truth altogether. Heartfield recognized the sort of veracity he wanted from a photograph, and he altered or even composed prints in any number of ways in order to force this revelation.

Unfortunately, the photographers whom he routinely hired to take the images that he could not otherwise appropriate often failed to understand his uniquely focused desire for truth-telling. One of those stymied souls was János Reismann, a Hungarian photographer and photojournalist who frequently helped Heartfield realize book covers during the Weimar Republic. "I stood with my camera ready," Reismann recalled of one particularly fanciful task he had been called upon to perform,

as Heartfield hypnotized a crab to make it retract its "mustache" and open its claws. When the crab definitively refused and I suggested first killing the animal to make





Fig. I.3 (left)
John Heartfield, *John Heartfield als Richter* (*John Heartfield as Judge*), ca. 1928. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Fig. I.4 (right)
John Heartfield, *Self-Portrait with Berlin Police President Karl Zörgiebel*, maquette, 1929. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

handling it easier, Heartfield objected most decisively. A dead crab can never look as lively as a live crab. A photograph that is supposed to be of a live crab will doubtlessly appear more authentic than a photo of a dead crab.[1]

This anecdote may initially strike admirers of Heartfield's art as odd, because the *photomonteur* famously built his practice on dissociating photography from the authenticity it was generally assumed to provide. His composition *Adolf the Superman* (1932), for example, appropriates a press image of the National Socialist leader exercising his famous oratorical skills (figs. I.1 and I.2). But with a snappy cut and paste, Heartfield strips away the familiar context served up by the original image—the proud leader and his mass-public reception—and exposes the real Hitler, as if with x-ray vision. Following this process of clinical diagnosis, the viewer finds a rapacious scoundrel and gluttonous swallower of big-industry money.[2] "You can really lie to people with photos, really lie to them," the artist would admonish later in life.[3]


Neue Erfolge der Naziheilkunde: SENF statt KÄSE
Dr. Goebbels
Heilsenf
„Weg mit dem weißen Käse! Brauner Senf ist das einzige Heilmittel."

Fig. I.5
John Heartfield, *Neue Erfolge der Naziheilkunde: SENF statt KÄSE* (*New Success of Nazi Medical Science: MUSTARD instead of CHEESE*), *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* 14, no. 10 (March 8, 1935): 160. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (87-S194). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Yet Heartfield's heavy investment in the authenticity of the crab photograph was not atypical. A man shown immersed in a barrel of Josef Goebbel's "Healing Mustard" was in fact a Czech assistant of the artist plunged into a colossal, albeit empty, wholesale mustard tankard (fig. I.5). To create the shot, Heartfield emptied a jar of the vinegary stuff over his assistant's head. As rivulets ran down the man's forehead and cheeks, he responded with an expression of deep resignation. "We suggested to Johnny," recalled a witness to the shot, "to use brown marmalade or chocolate syrup instead of mustard, but he would not retreat. He did not want to work with false materials, for he believed that the outcome would also be false."[4]

Such anecdotes are legion, and tellingly consistent: the photographs made under Heartfield's direction held to an exacting sort of authenticity. Frost photographed for a book cover had to be naturally occurring rather than frozen for the occasion. A glistening soap bubble had to clearly reflect the desired subject without the aid of montage or airbrush. And a dove of peace impaled on a bayonet had to be just that, despite the artist's well-known love of animals (fig. I.6). Considering Heartfield's general habit of overturning an appropriated photograph's first flush of meaning

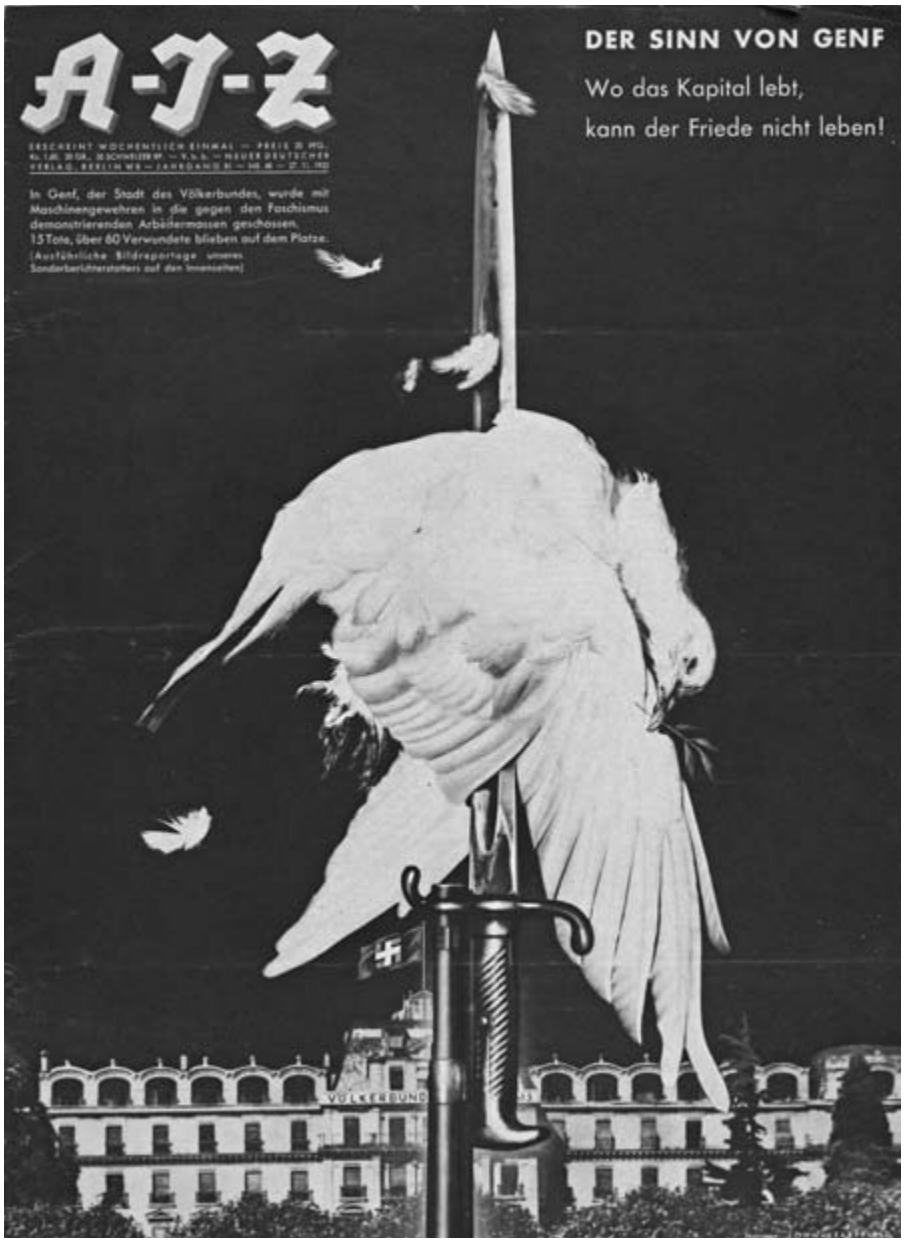

A-I-Z
DER SINN VON GENF
Wo das Kapital lebt,
kann der Friede nicht leben!
In Genf, der Stadt des Völkerbundes, wurde mit Maschinengewehren in die gegen den Faschismus demonstrierenden Arbeitermassen geschossen. 13 Tote, über 60 Verwundete blieben auf dem Platze.
VÖLKERBUND



Fig. I.6
John Heartfield, *Der Sinn von Genf* (*The Meaning of Geneva*), *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* 11, no. 48 (November 27, 1932): 1137. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (87-S194). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Fig. I.7
John Heartfield, *Zum 30. August, 1932* (*On the Occasion of August 30, 1932*), *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* 11, no. 36 (n.d. [1932]): 843. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (87-S194). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

with snips and paste, the "real" that these images plied likely had less to do with the physical world standing before the camera's lens than the sense of its realness intuited by his viewers. Heartfield, in other words, valued photography not for its rational appeal, that logical assurance of optical veracity cultivated by its seamless surface. Instead he prized its subjective capacity to link the somatic and the psychic in deeply moving combinations.[5] His was an emotional rather than a rational authenticity, and given a range of tools, he would produce this genuineness in any way possible. Calibrated correctly, the penetrating sensibility he hoped to activate might seem to jump from the photograph and strike its viewer with a bracing and passionate political jolt. This impact constituted his essential reason for imbuing a

photograph with authentic liveliness, genuine materials, and—most famously—the force of carefully calibrated manipulations.

The examples above thus show just a handful of Heartfield's many approaches to provoking an affective response. He would appropriate photographic fragments and juxtapose them such that they revealed a shocking new meaning, much as a skilled debater might contrast the day's political arguments to unveil alien machinations behind familiar discourses (fig. I.1). He would savagely slice through a print in order to suggest violence against its subject, much as one might attack an effigy (fig. I.4). He would merge appropriated fragments into a parallel reality whose very distinction from lived experience granted it a revelatory sense of being truer and more genuine than the observable world, despite its stunning irreality or surreality (fig. I.7). He would even cut away the genuine wholesale mustard tankard into which he had placed his Czech assistant and substitute a standard mustard jar made to look colossal (fig. I.5). The deep feeling this provoked, rather than the reality-based bona fides it confirmed, demanded just this intervention. And of course, he directed his photographer friend János Reismann to pursue a nearly invisible emotional stimulus. Heartfield knew what he wanted from photographs. And he made these determinations in order to force the medium to reward him with a resplendent and pointedly agitated response from his audience.

It is precisely this need to enhance or correct a photograph that informs the primary inquiry of this book. Heartfield famously declared that "new political problems demand new means of propaganda. For this, photography possesses the greatest power of persuasion."[6] Yet the seamless photographic image as traditionally imprinted on paper regularly failed to satisfy him. Photography could be persuasive as a teller of truth, in other words, but only after it has been enhanced by the nonphotographic procedures he often employed. Then again, the procedures of photomontage could also be used to further mislead the viewer, as he judged was the case with his opponents' images.[7] Heartfield thus found himself deeply ambivalent about the medium to which he devoted his professional life and his very identity. These mixed feelings, generated by the tension between photography's undiminished promise and its regular failure, spurred Heartfield to continually reinvent the medium as an emotional rather than a rational means of communication. The result was his stunning and ever evolving practice of photomontage.

In focusing both on this ambivalence and on its productive consequence, this study takes a close look at the historical context in which Heartfield began his photomontage practice. It also investigates the personal and professional formation that brought him to picture making in the first place, and the ways in which his pictures made meaning under these historical and formative conditions. I ultimately suggest that Heartfield came to photography not because it had moved him but because it had broken its promise to do so. At a moment of rapidly advancing modernity and the unprecedented experience of World War I, the latter of which made modernity's complexity manifest, Heartfield and his cohort awoke to a deeply disoriented European society. Images, as he and his friends soon concluded, should no longer

coddle, titillate, or distract. Now they had to report bracingly on the world in crisis. Artists would thus need to abandon their bohemian cloisters and transform their aesthetic experiments into contingent, engaged, and aggressive pictures. Because of these new demands, photography entered their sights. Yet this most modern and realist of pictorial media (along with film) consistently proved inadequate to its seemingly self-evident task of representing the actual. Far from accommodating the multisensory experience of urban life, the overlapping time frames of mechanized war, and the jolting impact of political revolution, Germany's widely disseminated prints lured audiences into false visions of subjective coherence and perceptual ease. In short, photography had lost its social mission and now did little to engage Heartfield or his larger audience with the day's pressing reality.[8]

Heartfield's fevered response forced the medium to convey the reality to which it was photochemically linked but which it inadequately represented. His techniques, I maintain, transformed the static opticality associated with the photograph into a multisensory assault seemingly made over time. The result was an experience very much like that of watching a film rich in optical and aural surprises. With the cinema often as his model, Heartfield sought to reinvent the photochemical trace as a gripping, punching, and screeching performance. This would not be static photography in the traditional sense. It would be an agitated image.

Taking this as its point of departure, the book offers an interlinked account of Heartfield's career and the history of early twentieth-century photography. Chapter 1 thus introduces the cultural conditions of German photography in which the college-aged Heartfield matured. Focusing first on satirical commentator Kurt Tucholsky, I suggest that an increasing number of observers just prior to World War I came to believe that photography was potentially an important tool of revelation but remained incapable of representing the complexity of their epoch, at least in its current form. Particularly when claiming neutrality, as the photography in Berlin's annual survey of slum housing did, the medium only demurred before new and often overwhelming forms of modern urban experience. Tucholsky suggested a solution to this problem in photo-juxtapositions that contrasted middle-class living and underclass experience. These compositions, he suggested, could flush out and assault their viewers with the new reality's brutal but repressed forces. Tucholsky had essentially begun to theorize avant-garde and political photomontage. But who, he asked, might possess the pictorial skills and fiery temperament to produce such compositions on a mass scale?

The chapter then introduces Heartfield as an artist perfectly prepared to realize Tucholsky's photographic charge. Having been abandoned by his parents and raised by a series of overwhelmed caregivers, the young Helmut Herzfeld consciously developed what his brother Wieland later called "a productive rage." The future photomonteur learned from an early age how to channel his famously short temper into carefully staged performances that took the form of subversive acts. His change of name to John Heartfield, during World War I, typifies the sort of defiant action that would take on striking visual form in his later pictures. This linkage between act

and image was encouraged by his bohemian circle of friends and by his advertising professor Ernst Neumann, one of Wilhelmine-era Germany's most talented applied artists.

The chapter goes on to propose that Heartfield's montage can be best understood as an ongoing act rather than a static image. To create his compositions, Heartfield gathered the epoch's most recognizable pictures and then slashed through their previously seamless surfaces. His creations foregrounded this productive force, allowing the mechanics (and even violence) of his montage process to remain visible through compositional gaps, stark juxtapositions of scale and theme, or the sheer volume of the wailing text that often accompanied his pictures. In this way, he fashioned a multisensory appeal that struck his broad audience like a politically propelled punch to the body. Using the technique of photomontage, Heartfield reinvested photography with the real-world tumult that it increasingly lacked in mass reproduction. The chapter suggests that Heartfield may have keenly understood photography's representational inadequacy but, like his avant-garde colleagues, never rejected the medium altogether. Instead, he sought to redefine its value by stimulating nonvisual forms of perception exactly where he had disrupted a print's optical consistency.

Chapter 2 commences a discussion of Heartfield's experience of World War I and the impetus this conflict provided to respond with photographs to the extreme conditions described in chapter 1. Enraged by the war and its general misrepresentation, Heartfield began juxtaposing official and illicit photographs of combat not long after narrowly escaping deployment to the front in 1915. His goal was to illustrate the jarring contrasts between the war's representation and its frontline reality. He eventually transformed this strategy into the production of photomontaged postcards (known to us today only through description), which he and his painter buddy George Grosz mailed to friends and anonymous frontline soldiers. These small works combined a shocking use of photographic juxtaposition with the apparent intimacy of personal correspondence, forcing onto photography the visceral trauma that military and press collusion had cleansed away. On these small missives, the men found they could "say in pictures what would have been censored had it been said in words."[9]

This chapter considers Heartfield and Grosz's postcards in order to explore the conditions that pressed photography to communicate more aggressively. It suggests that sometime within the first two years of World War I, the government's and the military's resolve to restrain the power of representation, particularly in photography and film, essentially rendered these communications media obsolete. Contained and ultimately unable to represent the extremes of war, particularly its unprecedented forms of perceptual experience, Germany's popular visual culture became increasingly bereft of meaning. Prompted by this shortcoming, Heartfield and Grosz tried to wrest what they perceived as reality's true form from given photographs by using montage techniques. The result, they hoped, would communicate the war's deepest horrors, shock the recipients of their missives, and thereby cultivate dissent. In the hands of these two artists, cubism and futurism's stress on

the disparity of fragmented compositional elements now became a stunning stress on social disparities, social contrasts.

The chapter takes as its starting point Brigid Doherty's groundbreaking work on Berlin Dada. But while it agrees with Doherty's account that a deeply corporeal war trauma, as well as a critical engagement with popular culture, stood at the origin of Berlin's montage impulse, it also argues that this trauma was largely photographic in its experience. Indeed, the majority of Berlin's future Dadaists, including Heartfield himself, saw relatively little combat.[10] What they did see was a vast body of grisly amateur photographs surfacing from the war's trenches, and a thoroughly sanitized representation of the conflict in illustrated magazines, postcards, and films.

Chapter 3 explores the invention of Heartfield's public persona during these war years, and his struggle to devise a mass-reproducible visual analogue to his public acts of dissent. It suggests that in the years from 1915 through 1917, he learned from his bohemian friends how one could build and perform an artistic identity. In his case, he chose to construct a public persona from a potent mix of carefully staged madness and political protest. His physical assault on one of his commanding officers while serving in the army and his noisy nervous breakdown just before being deployed to the front became hallmarks of this new man.

It was only upon seeing George Grosz's powerful drawings, however, that he found a way to convey this sort of aggressive performance in images that could pass muster with wartime censors and, thereby, reach vastly greater audiences. With his brother Wieland, Heartfield quickly shepherded Grosz's art into print by founding a magazine called *Die neue Jugend* (*New Youth*). In its pages the future photomonteur would develop graphic and typographic designs that seemed to scream and punch just as hard as his own actions and Grosz's prints. Heartfield, as I assert, was no longer an advertiser in the traditional sense or even a bohemian personality frequenting artsy cafés. He had become a fully developed avant-garde artist capable of delivering his multisensorial assault across various media: photography, graphic design, even performance. This capacity would soon lead him to film, where he also sought to strike at a mass audience with a stunning blend of madness and political dissent.

Chapter 4 turns to Heartfield's subsequent and curious stint as a director of animated propaganda films. It suggests that these films, which he made with the help of George Grosz for the German Foreign Office, conclusively taught him how to stimulate the sensations of sound and touch using images alone. Heartfield's initial reason for proposing this late 1917 project was to maintain his deferment from frontline combat. But he soon realized that his films might provide an opportunity to fashion visions of terror and shock for war-weary audiences anesthetized by patriotic propaganda, a vast genre dismissed by critics as "hurrah kitsch." His hope was to drive these spectators mad, much as Berlin's Dada movement—of which he was now an important member—was using performance to drive its audience nearly to riot.

With this goal in mind, Heartfield shunned live-action depictions of the war, which were subject to heavy censorship, and instead drew on American-style cin-

ematic animation to convey a subversive message about the war's violent extremes. Although he later became famous for his photomontages, here he avoided the photographic basis of film specifically because it lent itself all too readily to prowar propaganda. By contrast, his film work, composed from Grosz's powerful drawing, attempted to reinsert somatic terror into representations of the conflict and thereby to counter the visually sedative character of contemporary German culture, particularly as seen in photography. The chapter concludes by noting the parallel between Heartfield's animation and Walter Benjamin's later reflections on the subversive dimension of Walt Disney's early animated shorts. Benjamin, I explain, knew that the Dadaists appealed not just to the optical but to other corporeal dimensions of perception—the aural and the tactile. It was this agitating appeal that Heartfield learned to fashion in animated film.

Chapter 5 discusses Heartfield's postwar Dada montage, focusing on his sudden return to photography. With the war's end, Germany broke into a revolution whose roiling environment Heartfield recognized as the uprising he had long sought to provoke with his art. He also perceived in Germany's young communist movement a successful agent for harried upheaval and, as he hoped, social utopia. Seeking to fashion a new "art propaganda made in the service of the workers' movement,"[11] he, again in collaboration with Grosz, returned to photography. But he made this return not for what the medium showed, but for what it occluded. The result was a photomontage practice that satirically and legibly contrasted surface apparition with underlying reality and, in so doing, promoted a new communist critical vision.

But once Germany's revolution conclusively failed, Heartfield grew bitterly enraged and once again sought to assault his audience with the unmediated "pulse of the times," as he explained his new goals. This pulse was not, however, constituted solely by the suppressed trauma of war that required unmasking. It was further animated by the tumult of revolution, which the new government violently repressed with campaigns of "*Ruhe und Ordnung*," or peace and quiet (literally, "quiet and order"). Under the renewed rubric of postwar Dada, Heartfield and his colleagues sought to "burn" the disorder of squelched upheaval into the traumatized minds of Germany's population, to reignite the revolution, and even to help assure its irreversibility. This would be his full Dada photomontage, the agitated image. Much to his disappointment, however, the German Communist Party (KPD) dismissed his shocking pictorial assaults as bohemian "bourgeois decadence" that could only confuse mass audiences seeking political guidance. Heartfield would be dogged by these charges for the remainder of his life.

Chapter 6 discusses Heartfield's post-Dada effort to tame the sensorial chaos of his earlier work. It proposes that he did so not in response to harsh KPD criticism, but rather to advertise the books of his sibling's publishing house more effectively. In the years between 1921 and 1929, brother Wieland Herzfelde built the small Malik Press, which had issued *Die neue Jugend* and Dada's periodicals, into one of Germany's largest publishing houses. Heartfield's contribution to this growth lay in

making largely foreign-authored and leftist books attractive to a broad audience. To achieve this difficult task he returned to his training as a paper packaging designer and concentrated on wrapping Malik's books with attractive and striking covers.

Working through innumerable image and text schemes for these small surfaces, he ultimately developed a simplified photomontage formula based on cinema marketing. It was in Germany's glamorous movie advertisements and film stills that he found a potent way of distilling complex narratives into easily legible juxtapositions of protagonists and antagonists. He also borrowed these images' familiar character types (often directly), although he used them to lure potential readers into identifying with tendentious political figures or against conservative cultural heroes. He had exchanged Dada's aggressive solicitation of multisensory shock for a seductive game that disclosed narratives and underlying character motivations in a surprising and potent flash. This was what one Russian commentator described as a "precise shot."[12] Looking at writer Siegfried Kracauer's 1927 writing on photography, I close by suggesting that Heartfield's mature photomontage succeeded at its solicitation because it filtered photography's abundant information and thus rendered the medium better suited to human memory, which also filters and transforms. To a significant degree, therefore, Heartfield had made his peace with mass photography, at least enough to enhance and exploit its alluring power.

It was this transformation, as I explain in an epilogue, that led to the pictures that have since made him famous. With a near endless stream of inventive book covers, his new form of political photomontage won widespread critical approval and by 1928 had become the new standard for a distinctly modern "proletarian art." Famously declaring that radical citizens "paint with the photo" and "write with the photo" in order to take command of the world through its representation, Heartfield had arrived at his creative apex. His propaganda images for Germany's Communist Party and his famous photomontages for *Die Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* (*Worker's Illustrated Magazine*) followed.

Throughout its investigation, this book remains critically attentive to the photomontaged images its seeks to elucidate and the historical archive that sketches their context. It also works closely with existing understandings of this avant-garde technique. Since the arrival of postmodern critical approaches in the 1980s, art historians and critics have prized interwar photomontage for its effort to mediate between the experience of urban modernity and mass images of the contemporary world. This picture form essentially brought avant-garde techniques into the realm of quotidian experience. Montage from this period, writes curator Matthew Teitelbaum, represents "an attempt to suggest the complexity of relations between art, mass media, and everyday life." For him, photomontage offers pictures "that at times integrate text, often conjure unreal space, and always incorporate a degree of narrative breakdown," thereby invoking "the discontinuous and the ruptured as the talisman of our [twentieth] century."[13] In so doing, this pictorial charm helped reconnect a sometimes autonomous avant-garde with the broader masses who scarcely consumed modern art.

These same understandings of photomontage also suggest that the technique democratized a fundamental lesson about photographic representation discovered in the avant-garde's aesthetic laboratory: a print's meaning is always fluid and thus contingent upon its context. Montage therefore showed its broad audience how "to divert the photograph from what it 'naturally' seems to say and to underscore the need for the viewer's active 'reading' of the image," as Christopher Phillips explains. The technique's ability to provide shocking transitions between assembled fragments thus becomes an impetus to a new sort of everyday vision, one that perceives "an old world shattered and a new world self-consciously in construction."[14] But the lessons in rational, activated, and critical vision that are understood to have derived from such pictures rested on the need to correct or upset the photograph's first flush of meaning, a fact again suggesting that the medium possessed tremendous representational inadequacies that artists felt compelled to address. Could it be, then, that photomontage arose not merely from an enthusiastic embrace of photography, as these and other accounts maintain, but also from a bitter disappointment with its realist and technical relationship to modernity? And might it also be that photomontage as a medium of agitational propaganda served less to teach rational vision and more to infuse perception with subjective emotion, as the very word "agitation" would suggest?[15]

Using the case of John Heartfield and just such a range of questions, this book seeks to reassess the relation between photography's rapid entry into the public sphere and the destiny of German avant-garde art, specifically photomontage. It proposes that photography's vastly improved reproducibility and accuracy around the time of World War I, and the resulting sudden ubiquity of photographic images, particularly in illustrated magazines, postcards, and posters, made its influence on mass audiences immediately apparent. The extent to which that impact could be beneficial or misleading provoked artists to respond by radically altering their own image practices.

My aim is to gently reassess existing histories of Germany's interwar art that describe the response to mass photography as celebratory.[16] By contrast, I argue that artists like Heartfield turned to the medium not just to deploy its representational power, but also to investigate its dangerous capacity to deceive or even stultify through endless profusion. Photomontage, "New Vision" photography, and *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) as a whole were, I argue, strategies devised by Germany's young artists to salvage, reclaim, and reinvent a medium whose validity had been deeply impugned by its heavy-handed use in war propaganda and its flaccid deployment in the revolutionary moment that followed.[17] These were developments in which Germany's new mass-image culture was deeply complicit. Heartfield's photomontage exposes the equivocation behind these modernist recovery efforts by continually stressing photography's misuse in the hands of his opponents, or the medium's inability to represent Weimar-era Germany's overlooked problems. His regular admonishment that "you can lie to people with photos" signaled how even his own work could not be entirely trusted.[18] This book explores the tremendous aesthetic invention that sprang from just this distrust.

1

THE PHOTOGRAPH AND THE PUNCH

1891–1914

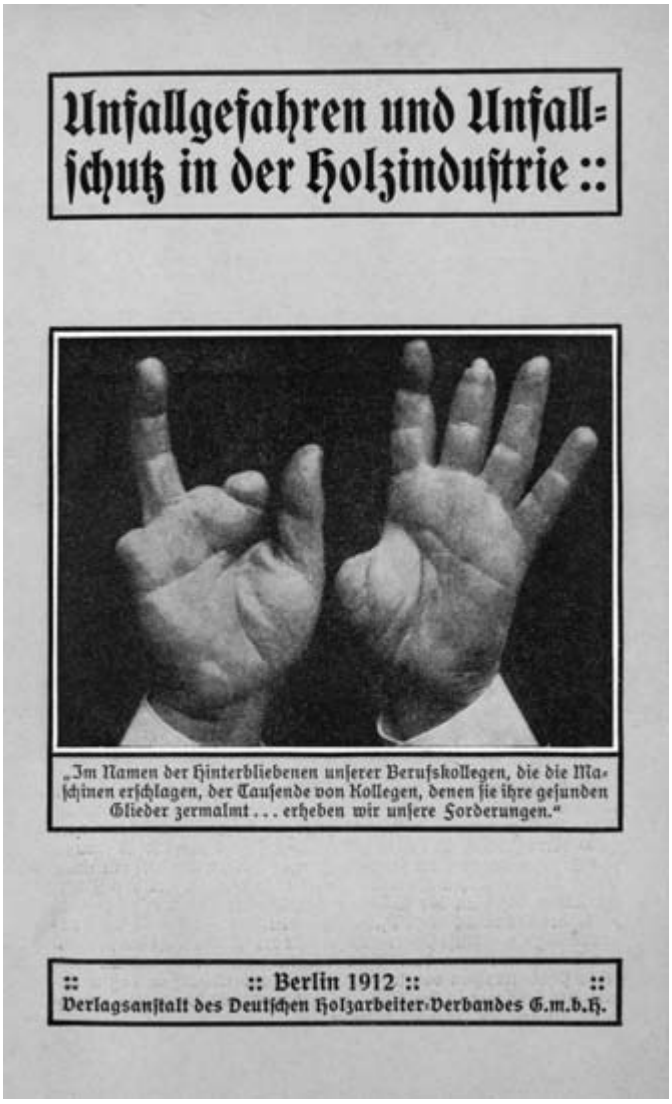
We need many more photographs. With them, the work of agitation can be made no more snappy. They allow no face-saving—So it was and that's it, full stop.

KURT TUCHOLSKY,
"More Photographs!" 1912[1]

IN MAY 1912 THE MAN WHO WOULD BECOME THE LEADING SATIRICAL ESSAYIST in Weimar-era Germany visited an exhibition of photographs that were decidedly unlike the arty camera works of the day. Hazy portraits and softly modulated, painterly landscapes were nowhere to be seen. Nor was the venue typical. He was not within the velvety confines of an upscale photography studio where works of pictorialism—as the movement generating such prints was called—regularly found their buyers. Instead, this young commentator for the Social Democratic Party paper *Vorwärts* (*Forward*), Kurt Tucholsky, stood in the head office of Berlin's industrial woodworker's union. And on this institution's walls he saw sharply focused, dramatically framed photographs documenting the horrific injuries that all too frequently maimed these workers' hands. So impressed was the young writer that he penned a "review" extolling the political potential of such uncompromising, even grisly, photographs:

> On the walls of a Berlin trade union office hang photos of mutilated hands—the workplace accidents of woodworkers. They have an effect that arouses even the most indifferent, those whose hard-right-wing opinions are determined by greasy newspaper supplements. Such a thing warrants emulation. For a print of halved fingers speaks (agitationally) more than statistics, more than reports, and even more than the sauciest speech. More Photographs![2]

These prints were in fact more than arousing. One of them (fig. 1.1), printed on the cover of a labor report that accompanied both the exhibition and its attendant


Unfallgefahren und Unfall=
schutz in der Holzindustrie ::
„Im Namen der Hinterbliebenen unserer Berufskollegen, die die Ma=
schinen erschlagen, der Tausende von Kollegen, denen sie ihre gesunden
Glieder zermalmt ... erheben wir unsere Forderungen."
:: :: Berlin 1912 :: ::
Verlagsanstalt des Deutschen Holzarbeiter-Verbandes G.m.b.H.


Hurrah, die Butter ist alle!
Goering in seiner Hamburger Rede: „Erz hat stets ein Reich stark gemacht
Butter und Schmalz haben höchstens ein Volk fett gemacht"

Fig. 1.1 (left)
Title page of *Unfallgefahren und Unfallschutz in der Holzindustrie. Verhandlungen der Konferenz der Maschinenarbeiter, Schneidemüller und Säger am 12., 13. u. 14. Nov. 1911 in München* (*Accident Risks and Industrial Safety in the Lumber Industry: Proceedings of the Conference of Machine Workers, Sawmill Operators, and Sawyers on November 12, 13, and 14, 1911, in Munich*). Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin/ Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

Fig. 1.2 (right)
John Heartfield, *Hurrah, die Butter ist alle!* (*Hurray, There's No More Butter!*), *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* 14, no. 51 (December 19, 1935): 816. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (87-S194). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Woodworker's Union Congress, confronts the viewer with a pair of open hands—minus several fingers. Carefully centered within the frame as if all ten fingers were present, the hands provide a shocking contrast between puffy white flesh and inky black absence. The mangled appendages press forward as if against a windowpane. Where the digits abruptly end, the background rushes forward to fill the shallow pictorial space with snap efficiency. The result is a painful visual inventory: three missing fingers and a hobbled fourth, a lost thumb, and a deep incision in the palm of the right hand. Clear and harsh, the image forces its viewers to confront the monstrous results of late Wilhelmine-era laissez-faire labor practices. As the exhibition brochure reported, "The following collection contains photographs of hand injuries so hideous that an uninitiated viewer will be completely unable to recognize the ruins of human limbs."[3]

Writing as just such an uninitiated viewer, the young art and literary critic recognized the power of these images and asserted that "we need many more photographs" to speak and agitate for victims of social misery.[4] Nothing might "arouse the indifferent" more effectively than such images, he pronounced. No other means of reporting could be as well insulated from ameliorative "whitewashing." The combination of tightly framed photographic clarity and grisly subject matter transported him to urban factories, where the overlooked industrial violence of his day pressed forward with shocking explicitness. Such an experience, Tucholsky noted with approval, could truly "thrash" (*prügeln*) the naïve viewer with what "was, and that's it, full stop." The young satirist, in other words, demanded not simply a greater number of documentary photographs. He wanted partisan, politically aggressive, viscerally veristic testimony that would strike the viewer like a punch to the stomach.

These were nearly the same demands on photography that would be made two decades later by photomontage artist John Heartfield. "Use the photo as a weapon," the *monteur* famously intoned in 1929.[5] "New political problems demand new means of propaganda," he added in 1930. "For this photography possesses the greatest power of persuasion."[6] Much like Tucholsky in 1912, Heartfield wanted photographic compositions that would be partisan, biased, aggressive, and—most importantly—capable of making optical persuasion a jolting and visceral experience.

Yet Heartfield understood the photograph's power in a significantly different way than Tucholsky, who seemingly wedded himself to the crisp and seamless photographic document. Heartfield did not. In his most famous work, fragments of appropriated photographs melt into each other and thereby highlight social or political contrasts in a strangely seamless alternative to visible reality (fig. 1.2). Yet this odd world was, in his view, truer than the one presented in his source photographs. "Like no one else," wrote the author Oskar Maria Graf in 1938, "Heartfield shows what is concealed behind things and appearances."[7] For this montage artist, the photograph regularly occluded as much as it revealed, and his images sought to jar the viewer into a critical awareness of just this fact.

The impact of Heartfield's images on audiences accustomed to seeing the photograph as an objective document was no less visceral than the punch thrown at Tucholsky by prints of disfigured hands. The historian-philosopher Walter Benjamin, for example, famously noted that the sort of montages Heartfield made as a Berlin Dadaist "jolted the viewer" like a "missile."[8] Upon seeing one of Heartfield's book covers for the first time, graphic designer Hans Holm recalled exclaiming "Now that's a bomb!" (plate 1).[9] Cultural commentator Hans Reimann noted in 1927 that Heartfield's photomontaged book covers were "disquieting, exciting, gentle, intriguing, and always extraordinary."[10] Nazi Germany's ambassador to Czechoslovakia complained to the Czech government in 1936 that Heartfield's exhibited photomontages "incite an extraordinary degree of violence against the German Reich and its Führer."[11] Other observers likewise remarked on the shock delivered by Heartfield's work, a jolt that could approach physical trauma and be tantamount to incitement. It was this sort of blow, delivered years earlier in the union hall exhibition, that prompted Tucholsky's call for "More photographs!"

The satirist's 1912 entreaty shows that a desire for far more agitational photography existed well before the avant-garde managed to produce such images in movements like Dada, surrealism, and Soviet factography. But the fact that he found a model for this sort of photography specifically in depictions of the physical trauma of industrial modernity, in the fleshy casualties of industrial woodworkers, points to an important recognition: the unprecedented conditions wrought by modernity required a new sort of imagery. Photography, although itself a product of the modern age, no longer seemed capable of adequately representing the massification of deep physical trauma provoked by industrialization and rapid urbanization. It had, therefore, to be transformed if it were to approximate the experience of now. Photomontage arose from this desire for a new and striking photographic realism.

The realization of this desire would be best made by someone who possessed the graphic training of a modern advertising agent and was disposed toward emotional displays—as exhibited in Tucholsky's spicy text. Such an artist would be able to convey his or her own experience of the day's traumatizing reality in a convincing visual form. Many candidates for this position would emerge, but the most successful long-term innovator of photomontage turned out to be the short-tempered and highly trained John Heartfield.

COLD DATA

When Tucholsky stepped into the woodworker's union exhibition in 1912, socially oriented, carefully systematized documentary photography was already familiar in Germany, just as it was in New York.[12] But the young *Vorwärts* critic had not yet seen photographs whose "effect" (*Wirkung*) was sufficient to "arouse the indifferent" into action. The restrained, "objective" documentary photographs of his time had largely failed to deliver this sort of visceral impact, the almost physical shock that would come from exposing the repressed urban horror of his modern epoch. The young satirist keenly understood this problem of restraint, and he sought to explain it in his 1912 review by referencing the best-known example of social documentary photography in Germany at the time, an annual survey of Berlin's notoriously poor housing conditions entitled *Unsere Wohnungs-Enquête* (*Our Apartment Survey*).[13] These reports, Tucholsky wrote, included bleak photographs with a revelatory power that could "make the uninformed grow pale." Yet even these images, he lamented, "are too mild, too transmuted; the reality is worse."[14] Remarkably, the man who year after year commissioned these pictures for the apartment survey, Albert Kohn, believed much the same. Moreover, he expressed his misgivings in an extraordinarily lucid fashion, questioning documentary photography's verisimilitude even at the moment of its zenith in Germany, an ascendance he had helped make possible.

Kohn had inaugurated his survey in 1901 as head of Berlin's Local Group Health Insurance Company for the Enterprise of Businessmen, Merchants and Pharmacists, a private, nonprofit concern.[15] The ostensible point of this annual investigation was to document the living conditions of the company's low-income clients and to outline

the threat these conditions posed to Berlin's broader public health. Kohn's larger goal, however, was to provoke a statutory reform in the way Berlin's tenements were built and regulated.[16] Given his position as head of an insurance company rather than a party or trade union, he had to pursue this advocacy with great care.

Kohn's firm was the largest of tens of thousands of public and private companies that provided Germany's population with medical insurance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this capacity, it insured the workers employed by a hodgepodge of Berlin's businesses and pharmacies.[17] These clients and their employers each paid a percentage of the employees' wages to Kohn's firm to purchase group health coverage, much as American employees and employers have done through the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In Germany, however, these schemes arose far earlier, as part of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's legislative effort to undermine the growing hold of the Social Democratic Party on German workers and, more generally, to bypass the Reichstag. His hope was to place administration of this insurance provision in hands regulated directly by the imperial state, thereby fostering a form of "state socialism" in place of full industrial socialism.[18] As historian Joseph Biesinger recently affirmed, "Bismarck's goal was not inspired by a humanitarian motive to protect workers from the uncertainties of the industrial economy but to win over the 'great mass of propertyless people' to the conservative way of thinking."[19] The group-health insurance companies that workers and employers were obliged to set up and join were thus intended to provide something close to universal health care without the socialization of a key German service. Moreover, because the membership of each company's board was constituted in proportion to dues paid, its makeup was generally two-thirds workers' representatives and one-third employer delegates. This mix provided an internal check on any "abuses" made by openly socialist delegates.[20] Such checks were critically important from the state's point of view and that of conservative businessmen.

The SPD, which advocated the full socialization of Germany's economy, fought Bismarck's health-insurance legislation when he offered it to the Reichstag on three occasions between 1881 and 1883. The party was keenly aware that the act formed part of the chancellor's bid to undermine its calls for socialization with—as SPD members saw it—mere half measures. But not long after the legislation passed, party members such as Kohn made peace with the resulting companies, recognizing their value as demonstrations of socialist administrative talent and vehicles for social change.[21] Kohn may, for example, have ostensibly initiated his Berlin apartment survey to document the causes and threat of illness among his largely working-class clients, but he also hoped that the survey would serve as a springboard for stricter housing regulation. His project ultimately succeeded in gaining him the authority to influence policy at a national level.

To stave off possible criticism by conservative politicians and businessmen—some of whom participated in his company and might see the survey as a political program well beyond the charge of a nonpartisan insurance company—Kohn devised a standardized, scientific method that mirrored the late nineteenth-century

housing surveys and exhibitions of Robert Weeks De Forest and Lawrence Veiller in New York.[22] And like these predecessors, of whom he seems to have been unaware, Kohn turned to photography, beginning with the 1903 survey, to add an "objective" and compressed register of data. As he explained in this first pictorial volume, "We accompany this year's work with several illustrations because we believe that some things can be better represented in this way than is normally possible with the quill."[23] This argument for photography was specifically one of neutral efficiency rather than partisan agitation.[24]

Kohn's survey employed a statistical methodology that threw out any numerical or pictorial extremes. This removal of outliers not only contributed to its sense of carefully designed objectivity but, just as important, inhibited potentially sentimental or plaintive advocacy. Like other late nineteenth-century statisticians, Kohn took his lead from a burgeoning social science that sought numerical representation of "the average man," "the criminal type," or "the typical Jew," as Allan Sekula has demonstrated.[25] Kohn, for his part, sought to define the "typical" living conditions of the low-income patients to whom his insurance company paid claims. This constituency provided a massive pool from which to extract the quintessential. As he confirmed in the 1902 survey, "Our agents have encountered no house and no street in which infirmed policy holders of our company do not reside." Nevertheless, as he added, despite this great mass of potentially plaintive cases "we have endeavored to give an objective account and stay away from any extreme representations."[26]

Kohn applied this drive for the statistical median to his "objective" photographic reports as well, assuring readers that "we have refrained from representing particularly crass examples." "These reports," he wrote, "just as the pictures standing alongside them, only illustrate the conditions that our tables numerically yield."[27] In fact, the juxtaposition of his photographs with exhaustive matrixes accounting for room measurements, number of windows, sicknesses in relation to availability of heating, people per room, people per toilet facility, people per bed, humidity, age of patients, and much more, suggests that the photographs arise directly from the pages of statistics and computed averages preceding them (fig. 1.3). He repeatedly claimed that the apartments he selected to photograph represented the typical or average conditions of his clients.



Fig. 1.3
Heinrich Lichte & Co., *Berlin SW, Kreuzbergstrasse 49*, in Albert Kohn, ed., *Unsere Wohnungs-Enquête im Jahr 1911*. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin/Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.



Fig. 1.4
Heinrich Lichte & Co., *Berlin SO, Liegnitzenstrasse 9. Querge-bäude pt. (Side-Building)*, in Albert Kohn, ed., *Unsere Wohnungs-Enquête im Jahr 1910*. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin/ Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

One can thus find consistent indications of restraint in Kohn's pictures. He always used, for example, the photography firm of Heinrich Lichte & Co. rather than his own agents, a practice that ostensibly guaranteed objectivity. Visually as well, the photographs adhere to a standard formula. The rooms are generally shot from eye level and at the greatest distance possible across a given space. Nearly all of the pictures include at least two walls and the corner between them, which provides a focus that helps make structural sense of the often motley and unhealthy confusion of living spaces (fig. 1.4). Emphatic close-ups and dramatic framing are entirely absent from the apartment survey's illustrated volumes, published from 1903 through 1922. Instead, the photos offer a sweeping interior slumscape, frequently featuring sick residents, to underscore the health-insurance company's mission. They also highlight other family members at work in informal cottage industry.[28]

Though tragic in their content, the photographs are as rigid as the formula guiding them and the numerical matrixes from which they appear to spring. The adults seem highly posed, and the children often look stunned by the startling blaze of the photographer's magnesium flash powder. Page after page, these images acquire a numbing regularity. Yet this rigorous standardization was precisely what made the images so useful to Kohn. Emphasizing the mechanical objectivity seemingly

provided by the camera, the pictures of typical Berlin housing misery aimed to provide unimpeachable witness. "So it was and that's it," as Tucholsky wrote of the woodworkers' photos.

Yet despite this striving toward objectivity and the attendant reward of disinterested authenticity, Kohn complained frequently about the inability of his images to fully convey the conditions they depicted. This admission is extraordinary for a man who invested himself so heavily in a documentary practice that quickly became a national model.[29] As early as the first illustrated volume of 1903, he sheepishly noted that although "we show common rooms [*Aufenthaltsräume*] that, despite their sadness, are no rarity . . ., it is nonetheless regretful that photography is unable to convey the dark impression of these spaces, no matter how superbly the pictures succeed."[30] Here Kohn expressed regret not that he had to restrain the medium with the statistical and mechanical practices of objectivity, but that photography was, at this historical juncture in its technical development, insufficiently vivid to capture the epoch's unprecedented housing conditions. In many cases, it may even have been misleading. "Some of the pictures could only be realized with the help of a flash," he noted in the 1918 volume, "making the rooms seem bright and even friendly, although in reality they are dark and sometimes pitch-black, as the pictures are often taken where none of the sun's rays are received." "The photograph by its art," he explained, "is only capable of giving a weak idea of the dampness on the ceilings, walls, and floors, and of the dirt that is hard to avoid in these miserable apartments. And the contaminated air that so often appears to accompany this misery cannot be represented at all."[31] These were limiting conditions of the medium itself, at least as he saw it in his day, and not limitations he imposed. The camera, itself a typically modern machine, could not capture the full perceptual assault of warehoused poverty in densely populated cities. Although in 1906 he maintained that "we let the pictures illustrating these reports speak for themselves," he ultimately acknowledged, as would Tucholsky, that the reality was worse.[32] What seems remarkable about this forthrightness is that Kohn saw a perceptual narrowing in photographic technology even as he insisted that it represented better than the pen.

This would be the limitation that Tucholsky, writing in 1912, wished to overcome. Although he applauded the aggressive power of the woodworker's images, their use of tight framing and plaintive appeals—the sort of drama Kohn abjured—Tucholsky conceded that they ultimately failed. These photographs, he confessed toward the end of his text, were still not strong enough to "thrash" with the multisensory impact of industrial reality. He proposed, however, a way around this perceptual limitation, and he relied on one of Kohn's "transmuted" survey images from the 1911 volume to do so (fig. 1.5).

> Here is one [photograph]—1911—: I always think to myself when I see it, why did no one exploit it long ago: In a kitchen—4.00 x 2.75 x 2.60 meters—four people are working, among them two school-age children, on the manufacture of party poppers . . . filth, disorder, dirty air. . . . Why not take this picture, then photograph a bourgeois wedding



Fig. 1.5
Heinrich Lichte & Co., *Berlin SO, Manteuffelstrasse 64*, in Albert Kohn, ed., *Unsere Wohnungs-Enquête im Jahr 1911*. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin/Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

party, a dance—and set the two next to each other?—Completely without text, or perhaps only: Here one finds bliss in his own way![33]

This photograph from Kohn's *Wohnungs-Enquête* indeed offers a sad scene of servitude and disorder. Following the standard formula, Lichte & Co.'s hired camera sweeps the crowded room from the back left, gathering a large field of visual data. Despite this optical plentitude, a subtle narrative nonetheless reveals itself to the discerning eye. In the left foreground lies a nearly completed box of poppers. A trail of leavings leads right and back toward the family's female members, who perform their labor on a small table at the center of the composition. On the left is a chaotic bed, on the right another table. As one school-age child looks toward the camera, another—younger—one stands at the work table, her gaze frozen, either by the intrusion of the camera or by the numbing burden of her ongoing tasks.

Kohn's accompanying caption highlights the children's legal obligation to be in school, rather than at work, and points out that "our pulmonary patient [female] of 16 years sleeps in this room." Yet the image itself remains substantiallly neutral in the face of such misery. Because the camera avoids the sort of close framing and specific focus that might help viewers sort, order, and filter this clutter of information, as was in keeping with Kohn's restrictions, the *visual* narrative can easily be lost. For this reason, the photograph struck Tucholsky as excessively mild and toned down.

The satirist's imagined corrective would juxtapose this cluttered representation of party-popper manufacture with a festive scene in which such treats might be consumed. Then between the two depictions—the worktable and the wedding dance—there would stretch a jarring cleft. Placed side by side with no explicit connective tissue— "completely without text," as Tucholsky exclaims—the pair would nonetheless imply the sort of social critique that Kohn fastidiously refused to spell out. The magic, for Tucholsky, was this: the juxtaposed images would speak for themselves, without external intervention—and without disrupting the visual rhetoric of authorless neutrality that rendered Kohn's picture, by itself, "too mild, too transmuted." Indeed, this neutrality only enhanced the authority and the agitational impact of the implied critique. In expressing his desire for jolting images, Tucholsky gave voice to a tenet that would guide Heartfield's future practice: photographic objectivity and contingent political expression must tango in order to produce the most striking picture possible.

There is, however, a further implication of Tucholsky's suggestion that would also inform Heartfield's work: the subtle encouragement to filter and select content from within a given image. By fashioning the party poppers into a thematic axis on which the two photos' relation would turn, Tucholsky's juxtaposition would effectively remove the visual detritus that clutters Kohn's image, the photographic "garbage" (in Siegfried Kracauer's later phrase) that obscures the relation between a box of poppers and its manufacturer.[34] In juxtaposition, the photographic pair

could reveal a compelling narrative of the commodity's life that itself clarifies the narrative of Kohn's original image.

Tucholsky, therefore, concluded that a single documentary image or even a collection of similar ones could never convey the acute horror of Berlin's poor housing conditions. Only by contrasting this poverty with the luxury that it seemingly made possible could one sort out the contents of the first image and make the misery of the conditions it depicted palpable. Only then could a clear political point emerge. For this reason, too, a single image of a dismembered worker's hand or even an exhibition filled with these images could never be enough. Such photographs needed to be juxtaposed with healthy bourgeois hands or the products manufactured by these maimed appendages of workers.

Ultimately, Tucholsky's suggestion demonstrates that in late Wilhelmine urban Germany, photography had been called on to convey what statistics, reports and even "the sauciest speech" could no longer reveal. Yet the seamless photograph as it was then constituted could no longer approximate the era's harsh reality. The neutrality of the restrained social-scientific document in particular dropped with an ineffective thud in a context already numbed by social and political extremes. The tightly framed and plaintive woodworkers' hands may have taken one step toward a visceral representation of these harsh conditions. But juxtaposition would perform this shock even better. Tucholsky nonetheless admonished:

> There are so few [of these photographs], all absentmindedly emerging through chance. This is nothing. Systematically, what must be shown is: this is how one is beaten, and this is how one is trained, this is how you are all treated, this is how you are all punished. With contrasts and juxtapositions. And little text.[35]

Tucholsky wished to see an intentional, rather than accidental, effort to disclose to vision the hidden brutality of his epoch. But who would produce this new sort of image? Who would fashion these physically agitating juxtapositions and abandon the restraint of illustrated periodicals? Who might abjure the objective discourse of Kohn's survey? Tucholsky's desired goal could be attained only through calibrated "contrasts and juxtapositions" that would make the disclosure of Wilhelmine violence nearly as punishing as the cruelty itself. Therefore, he wanted someone to willfully transform such shocking and illuminating juxtaposition into a practice so powerful that it made text a secondary consideration.

Tucholsky never lost interest in the potential of juxtaposed photographs to have a near-physical impact on their viewers, and he continued to pen suggestions on this matter well into the Weimar period. For example, in an article he published thirteen years later, in 1925, the satirist gave a name to the "more photographs" he wished to see: *Tendenzfotografie,* or "tendentious photography."[36] He also sharpened his vision for the medium, suggesting that its most advantageous use would be found in a politically sharp and photo-illustrated periodical that allowed for the careful crafting of juxtapositions. But having lost hope that the Social Democratic Party,

with which he was no longer associated, could sponsor such imagery, he pleaded:

> Why does no one among the [Weimar-era] communists set himself the task of fighting in the company of photography? . . . Photography is irrefutable. It simply cannot be beat. Only someone who has already made photographic juxtapositions knows what they can do.[37]

Indeed, who would this communist skilled in photography be?

THE COMBATIVE ARTIST

Like many leftists in the Weimar era, Tucholsky thought he had good reason to dismiss the once acerbic and oppositional German Social Democratic Party. Before conceding to Germany's participation in World War I, the SPD had openly advocated Marxist political and economic positions that horrified the ruling elite. During this time, Tucholsky had written about art in an SPD magazine that was often aggressively partisan. This context encouraged him to insist on pictures that pulled no punches and that fought with the same vigor his party sponsors demonstrated in the political arena.

With the outbreak of war, the SPD, which had previously been excluded from any real governmental role, finally faced parliamentary decisions that had consequences, chief among them being approval of the war credits that made the conflict possible. The party's heated internal conflict over this concession sowed the seeds of its eventual split. Throughout the war, as further war credits came up for votes, the party's more radical members persisted in voting no and increasingly accused their more moderate colleagues of betraying the proletarian cause. By the time Germany's certain defeat neared and the moribund *Kaiserreich* handed government power to the SPD in October 1918, this internal resistance had already prompted a split; antiwar dissenters left to form the Independent Social Democractic Party, which in turn incubated the more radical Spartacus League. This last political faction became the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), a development announced retroactively by former SPD parliamentarian Karl Liebknecht on January 1, 1919.

The animosity between this rebel leader and the SPD reached a fever pitch just after the war when, during the 1918–1919 German Revolution, their respective political forces declared separate republics. The SPD managed to gather support from old-guard domestic powers and to position itself as a caretaker government. Once in power, the SPD-led coalition solicited bands of ultra-right-wing irregular soldiers to suppress the revolution into which the Weimar Republic was born. "Someone must be the bloodhound," declared majority socialist interior minister Gustav Noske.[38] With the help of these *Freikorps* soldiers, he violently suppressed the largely disorganized outbursts of revolution that defined the first postwar months, and thereby helped establish the politics of violence that would scar the Weimar era.

Although Liebknecht's new Communist Party, co-led by radical pamphleteer Rosa Luxemburg, officially stood on the sidelines through the violent January of 1919, the two leaders were nonetheless perceived as state threats and assassinated by *Freikorps* troops that same month, creating an irresolvable hostility between the SPD and Germany's new communists. This schism was only enhanced by the Moscow-based Communist International and, by extension, Joseph Stalin, who fanned the fiery flames of antagonism between the two parties.[39]

The violence between the two parties remained rhetorical through most of the subsequent epoch. When confrontation finally became physical, however, the consequences were measured in corpses. April 1929 marked a grim and sudden turning point in this evolution. The government had prohibited all protests since a December 1928 brawl between the KPD's militia and the Nazis' SA (*Sturm Abteilung*). The following April, Berlin's Social Democratic police commissioner, Karl Zörgiebel, and his Social Democratic superior in the Prussian regional parliament, refused to relax a ban to permit the KPD's regular, albeit aggressive, May Day rally. On May 1, communist groups defiantly assembled throughout the capital's working-class districts and were then summarily fired upon by Zörgiebel's police. Thirty-two people, mostly bystanders, were shot to death during this outburst. The fighting then continued throughout the month, which came to be known as Bloody May. From this point forward, German communism essentially adopted a war footing.

Now in permanent crisis mode, the KPD labored to decide what sort of response it should fashion to the political party its members had begun calling—partly at Moscow's insistence—the "social fascists." For one hastily planned meeting of the Central Committee's Agitation and Propaganda Department, various illustrators and graphic artists from the party-sponsored Association of Revolutionary Visual Artists were called to speak. Among the invitees was a photomonteur known by his pseudonym, John Heartfield. He was the communist artist who, following Tucholsky's 1925 *Tendenzfotografie* article, had slowly persuaded the skeptical party leadership that photography could become a powerful political weapon. But when the meeting began, as graphic artist Max Gebhard later recalled:

> Heartfield was not there. It took at least ten minutes, and then he suddenly surfaced. His entire body shivering. One could sense his agitation, and he was quickly asked: "Johnny, where have you come from? Where were you . . . ?" "I was at the battlefield. I had to see where it happened. I need this for my work. . . . I had to experience this." . . . He shivered over his entire body and he could barely speak from the distress of these experiences.[40]

If Heartfield's subsequent photomontages were to make his audience shiver with agitation, the artist first had to confront the actual subject matter directly and experience it as a full corporeal sensation. Only then could his pictures convey the physical, aural, and even olfactory assault he had witnessed and they, in turn, recorded. Their impact would be much like the jolt Tucholsky experienced in the 1912 woodworker's union exhibition, although far more intense.

Heartfield had come to experience even everyday life as an assault, and his correspondingly aggressive response to that wallop defined his approach to photomontage. Romanian author Elias Canetti, who befriended the monteur during the Weimar period, observed this physical-photographic fusion with great perception:

> Heartfield was always swift. . . . If an idea struck him, he would leap into the air. He uttered his sentences vehemently as if attacking you with his leap. . . . It took me a while to realize that this was how he reacted to everything that was new to him. It was his way of learning; he could only learn aggressively; and I believe that one could show that this is the secret of his montages. He brought things together, he confronted things after first leaping up at them, and the tension of these leaps is preserved in his montages.[41]

After the shock of his battlefield visit, Heartfield appropriated a sparse handful of photographs and leaped at them with scissors and paste in hand. The critic Adolf Behne described the resulting images as "pictures with dynamite."[42]

ITCHING FOR A FIGHT

News of the battles of Bloody May percolated through Weimar-era Germany's sophisticated network of magazines, illustrated weeklies, and cinema newsreels. Always the movie buff, Heartfield happened to be in one of Berlin's grand cinemas for an evening's entertainment when a topical newsreel aroused his still-raw memories of the urban battlefield. As his photographer colleague and friend János Reismann recalled:

> Not everything was shown [in the reel], but certainly something. At any rate, it was enough to give an idea of the bestial and brutal action of Zörgiebel's police, overwhelmingly and cold-bloodedly murdering unarmed workers. Even the mostly good bourgeois audience at the Ufa Zoo Palace answered the film strips with howls and scornful whistling. There were naturally those who demonstratively and approvingly applauded the actions of Zörgiebel's police, among them a Teuton as tall as a tree who sat not far from the photomonteur. Heartfield leaped from his seat as if stung by a tarantula and hissed at the broad-shouldered German, "You swine! You swine! You swine!" After the program came to an end, the Teuton, who lay in wait for Heartfield, grabbed the slight man by his collar. "Now you will surely and promptly take back your insult.—What did you say I was?" Heartfield, in an iron vice, powerless, scarcely breathing: "You are a swine." The man threw Heartfield to the floor and punched him over and over in the face, repeating with rage, "What am I? What am I?" Heartfield, with lips pressed together: "A swine. A swine. A swine". . . until he was freed—bloody, smashed, half unconscious—by a growing crowd of onlookers.[43]

Heartfield's political expression, of course, extended well beyond such stunning in-

stances of militant protest and self-destructiveness. Before the war he had trained in advertising art and quickly became one of Germany's most acclaimed new graphic-design talents. He later applied those pictorial skills to shocking photomontages that encoded his consciously overheated political sensibility. If anyone in Tucholsky's time had the formation and temperament to transform hostility into images, it was Heartfield. His hissing, his shivering, even his taking of lumps essentially constituted an aggressive performance that his pictures sought to convey as an exquisitely violent package of sensations. He solicited and captured frenzied perceptions, then transcribed them into images that packed an unusual punch.

As the summer of 1929 passed and Berlin's population absorbed the impact of Bloody May, Heartfield slowly transformed his emotional encounters at the battlefield and his brawl with the "Teuton as tall as a tree" into an aggressive response that incorporated his burning hostility, his active performance of that anger, and his professional training in image production.

This response became pointedly public with a September 1929 article in the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* that introduced Heartfield to the leftist weekly's readers. In these pages, beginning in early 1930, Heartfield would publish his most famous photomontages. But for now, the editors wished to report on his commanding presence in the landmark *Film und Foto* exhibition that had opened in Stuttgart and was set to travel throughout Germany. To complete the report, the editors asked Heartfield to provide an image of himself. He responded by generating a photographic self-portrait, to which he then adhered a photograph of police commissioner Zörgiebel. In the final composition, Heartfield appeared to be slicing through the commissioner's neck with a pair of scissors, slowly and cruelly exacting revenge (fig. I.4). His montaged self-portrait thereby served as a carefully calculated performance made over time, its duration marked by a slow slice across the surface of appearance and into the body of his opponent.

From this point forward, Heartfield's art took an exceedingly aggressive turn, as Germany's Communist Party forged a new policy of violently engaging its enemies.[44] As the party escalated its rhetoric against the Social Democratic Party, and as its members took to city streets with guns and clubs to fight the National Socialists, Heartfield deployed his scissors in a similarly exacting form of ferocity. Finally, the aggressive wielder of photography whom Tucholsky had first summoned in 1912 had appeared, bringing "punishing," "thrashing," and distinctly nonobjective photographs made by a man who scarcely distinguished between fighting with his fists, his voice, and his pictures. With the appropriated and juxtaposed photograph as a weapon, Heartfield could transform the "tension of his leaps" into a kind of photographic composition that did not represent, document, catalog, or prove. Instead, his images took a stand—aggressive, openly biased, and often violent—that ultimately defined the period's standard for agitational propaganda, a carefully calibrated form of partisan advertising. Not coincidentally, he and Tucholsky ended up collaborating in 1929 on one of Weimar's most notoriously aggressive publications, the antimilitarist picture book *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles* (plate 1).[45]

THE MONTAGE OF DEEP CUTS

John Heartfield, an intentionally emotional, violently tempered, and talented man, fashioned himself as the sum of varied experiences, many of which were profoundly traumatic. "I lost my parents in 1899 and thereafter lived as an orphan with different families," he recounted in a 1950 vita.[46] Partly through the actual experience of this loss but also in its regular retelling, Heartfield's harrowing youth continually figured as a key component of his public persona. Like his images, the story may be partly an assemblage of authentic memory fragments and partly an invention. But whatever its origins, the artist's account of his upbringing helps explain his understanding of photomontage as a product of his individual encounter with the moment's overlooked horrors.

Though just seven or eight years old when his parents abandoned him and his siblings, Heartfield had, by his own reckoning, already lived a life worthy of a Brothers Grimm fairy tale.[47] His father was the notorious socialist poet and playwright Franz Held (a pseudonymous shortening of Herzfeld, which means hero in German). Held's family, the Herzfelds, were highly assimilated Jewish Germans who lived in the town of Neuß in the Düsseldorf area of the Rhine Valley. There the family patriarch, Jonas, had founded one of the region's most successful textile plants, the Stoffdruck und Färberei Herzfeld, which grew to figure prominently in the region's nineteenth-century industrial history.[48] From his birth, on May 30, 1862, Franz reportedly possessed a passionate temperament, much like that of his eldest son and unlike that of his father, Jacob Herzfeld, who prided himself on being an enlightened and "irrepressible seeker of truth."[49] By the age of fifteen, Franz was writing poetry, and in 1876 his first theater work was staged. Key to Franz's persona was a deep romanticism that led him to abandon his law education in favor of philosophy and literature, and then, finally, to take on the poet's penury.[50] His older brother Joseph Herzfeld was more pragmatic, first building a legal practice during a lengthy stay in the United States and then—upon returning to Germany—becoming a career politician in the Social Democratic Party. Joseph won election to one of the party's few parliamentary seats in 1898 and, according to Heartfield's brother, Wieland Herzfelde, became a reasonably wealthy man.[51]

Franz, meanwhile, achieved early success with his writing; beginning in 1887, he published a series of novels, poetry volumes, and plays.[52] Most of these works, such as *Ein Fest auf der Bastille* (*A Party on the Bastille*, 1889), were openly socialist in their orientation and decidedly passionate in their poetic form. Franz had seemingly become the bohemian equivalent of his older, more institution-oriented socialist brother. According to the research and recollection of Wieland Herzfelde, Held met his future wife, Alice Stolzenberg, around 1890. Born out of wedlock in 1867, she was reportedly raised by her Protestant mother after a torrid affair with the Czech nationalist writer and rebel Josef Václav Fric. The adult Alice become involved in Germany's trade-union movement, for which she became a passionate speaker. It was apparently at a demonstration where she had exercised this rhetorical talent

that she met Franz.[53] On June 19, 1891, she gave birth to their first child, Helmut. Because the couple was not married, Helmut officially carried his mother's name and the designation of "bastard."[54] The son's family name was eventually switched to Herzfeld, most likely in Austria, and he bore this appellation on paper until he officially changed it after World War II in what was then the German Democratic Republic. Like his father, John Heartfield would be best known by his pseudonym, in this case a brazenly Anglophone invention that he had begun using regularly by the middle of August 1917. This devising, made in the midst of World War I, constituted not just a protest against Germany's strongly anti-British sentiment but also a persona that became a fundamental component of his artwork.[55]

Aside from perennial money problems, the Held/Herzfeld family's greatest challenge came in dealing with the responses provoked by the father's writing. The staging of his published plays in Berlin seems to have caused the greatest controversy, but his eventual 1895 prosecution for blasphemy took place in Munich. Either because of this judgment or his desire to live in the mountains, a regular theme in his writing, Franz and the family, including the new daughter, Hertha, fled to Switzerland. It was there, in 1896, that Heartfield's younger brother, Wieland, was also born. Shortly after the sibling's birth, Held was expelled from Switzerland as a "poet without income."[56] The family then crossed the country's eastern border and settled in Aigen bei Salzburg, a small village near the better known Salzburg, Austria. In the following years, a fourth sibling was born: the sister Charlotte. This larger family soon found itself living on bare subsistence.

Upon arriving in Austria, Franz and Alice had befriended the mayor of their new village. He was immediately sympathetic to their plight and offered them his mountain cabin, tucked in the forest above the town. When Wieland Herzfelde later recounted stories of this small structure, where the family lived for three years, much of his material came from the rich memories provided by this mayor, Ignaz Varnschein. Apparently the gregarious man never tired of telling Wieland and Helmut the tale of their childhood years. Herzfelde later reported that this early home

> was nice and airy, and contained a large room with small windows in the thick wooden walls. Through the open door one could look over the pine trees and into the valley of fields lying below and further even into the Salzach Valley. Before the door ran a few steps and then the hut, resting on wooden poles with its back wall built against the [mountain's] slope.[57]

This structure romantically animated Herzfelde's image of his childhood. But, as he also maintained, it would haunt his older brother throughout his life.

Whether tiring of long-term subsistence living or drawn despondently yet further into an Alpine escape, Held abandoned the family at the end of these three years, in 1899. Alice deserted the four children around the same time. Her reasons are similarly uncertain, but she apparently experienced a nervous breakdown, given that she appeared in a Salzburg mental institution shortly thereafter.[58] Her precipitous

departure, Wieland supposed, left a deep imprint on the only one of the children old enough to understand what had happened. As Herzfelde later maintained:

> My brother, who was five years older, experienced the full impact of the loss. For four days and nights he was alone with us younger siblings in the isolated hut. The eight-year-old never thought of going down into the village. Frightened and helpless, despairing more completely with each passing hour and day, he ran into the woods again and again to call just one word: "mother."[59]

Only when Mayor Varnschein and his wife, Klara, grew concerned at not having seen the parents for days did they journey to the cabin and find the abandoned children.[60] According to Herzfelde, this experience would forever shape Heartfield's character. "These four days and nights of loss," he later explained, "indelibly engraved themselves in my brother's features and, I believe, gave rise to the most characteristic side of his existence: he responds to any sorrow he witnesses as heavily as if it were an attack against himself."[61]

This sensitive disposition, which Herzfelde later described as "productive rage," was supposed to have been further formed by succeeding hard knocks. The Held/Herzfeld orphans were adopted by the childless Varnscheins, who lovingly raised the younger three as Catholics. The Protestant-identified Helmut, however, regularly visited the nearest evangelical church and soon chafed under the taunting doled out by Catholic students from the village. His growing rebelliousness at this persecution reportedly led the Varnscheins to place him in a reform school staffed by sadistic nuns who punished the children with lashings of stinging nettles on their bare bottoms. Helmut was apparently abused so badly at the school that his adoptive father allowed the boy back home despite his recalcitrant disposition.[62]

Eventually, the Varnscheins appealed to the boy's uncle Joseph Herzfeld for the funds that would enable young Helmut to receive a formal education. Because of a misunderstanding or perhaps Joseph's frustration with his brother Franz, now, like his wife, living in an insane asylum, the money was not forthcoming. Instead, the Varnscheins sent Helmut and Wieland to live with their maternal aunt Helene and her drunken husband, Heinrich Heuß, in Wiesbaden, Germany. There, Heartfield apprenticed in the husband's bookstore, basically running the business while his uncle spent the day in a nearby bar.[63]

The story of Heartfield's youth can seem a deeply purple text unworthy of serious consideration. Moreover, it does appear to have been partly fabricated. Its primary author was of course Heartfield's brother Wieland, who relished his own gifts as a storyteller. Through the late 1930s and into the postwar period, he used these talents to manage the artist's reception, a task that demanded a certain degree of caution in a thoroughly Stalinist exiled cohort and, later, a German Democratic Republic suspicious of photomontage's avant-garde associations. Within these contexts it was clearly better to trace the origins of montage to Heartfield's traumatic childhood rather than his stint as a Berlin Dadaist. Moreover, surviving letters from Alice

Herzfeld to the Varnscheins reveal that Herzfelde's story lay incomplete. In these missives one finds her almost desperate effort to maintain a relationship with her children even as her mental illness condemned her to a psychiatric hospital and to various rented rooms when not under treatment. Until her death in 1911, Alice wrote tragic missives lamenting her lost role in her children's lives and conveying her gratitude to the Varnscheins and her sister Helene for looking after her offspring.[64] Yet despite the suspicious sentimentality of Herzfelde's account and its sometimes troubled veracity, it played a crucial role in constituting and animating Heartfield's public persona. For it is with this background that the artist convincingly fought perceived injustices as personal assaults that required aggressive responses.

Other friends and observers of Heartfield, aside from Herzfelde and Canetti, help confirm and round out this picture. In his essay "Johnny," Russian writer Sergei Tret'iakov notes an example of the artist's temper as reported to him by playwright Erwin Piscator. According to this recollection from the late 1920s, the diminutive photomonteur was giving a political speech from behind a podium that nearly hid his presence on the stage. Upon seeing a political opponent in his audience, the already agitated Heartfield spun into a wild tantrum. Focusing his invective directly at this adversary, Heartfield began shouting with rage and pounding upon the podium with such force that the relatively large piece of furniture moved slowly forward on the stage and eventually toppled into the audience.[65]

Having witnessed similar episodes himself, Tret'iakov noted that when

> a certain type of person appears before him, say a hypocrite, or a platitude maker bearing the mask of an academic, or a person who believes that parliamentary government can stabilize the economy and who speaks as if stuffed with irreconcilability, then right away Johnny steps up fully for a fight, the freckles distinctly bulge from his face as it tarnishes blue with rage, his lips part to reveal prone teeth, and with birdsong and a stutter he lets loose a canon of blended curses. [Fig. 1.6.][66]

Heartfield's good friend in wartime and postwar British exile, the portrait artist Milein Cosman, similarly reports that the artist was deeply warm and friendly, but only to a point. If the conversation switched to politics, she explains, "He grew so angry that he would frighten me."[67] Cosman affirms that this passion, when focused and carefully managed, was precisely what seemed to generate Heartfield's photomontages. It formed the conceptual basis, in other words, of the sometimes-frightening antagonism conveyed in the best of his work.

We are wise to remember Canetti's admonition that Heartfield "learned only from things that he regarded as attacks."[68] However, both Canetti and Tret'iakov described the same scenario as lying behind the monteur's treatment of a photograph. If an image displeased him, Heartfield shook it furiously until it fell apart. In this unsettled attack, he confronted the image with another photograph, besmirched it with color, penetrated it with text, unbalancing its proportions, or just cut it with scissors. Heartfield's famously violent temperament, whether rooted in his childhood



Fig. 1.6
John Heartfield, *Untitled (Self-Portrait)*, 1920. Extended loan from Joseph B. Hershenson, 97.2009, Art Institute of Chicago. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

experiences or developed as part of a performed character, became a key component of images meant to rattle and shock his audiences.

THE ADVERTISING ARTIST

What enabled young Helmut to harness his publicly problematic temperament as productively as he did were the skills he began to acquire once his career interests took shape. The artist later recollected that he and his brother longed to follow in their father's literary footsteps, a challenge that Wieland partially met by becoming one of Germany's most important publishers.[69] But aside from writing poetry for each other and plowing through the literature in their drunken uncle's bookstore,





Fig. 1.7 (left)
John Heartfield, *Die Hütte im Walde* (*The Cottage in the Forest*), 1907. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Fig. 1.8 (right)
John Heartfield, book cover for Ernst Kreowski, ed., *Franz Held. Ausgewählte Werke* (*Franz Held: Selected Works*; Berlin: Frowein Verlag, 1912).

the brothers participated in design and slogan competitions offered by corporations.[70] On at least one occasion, as Herzfelde recalls, their collaboration on a slogan won the two siblings fifty marks in a contest sponsored by the Maggi soup-seasoning concern.[71]

Nonetheless, young Helmut soon found that his talents lay in the visual arts rather than in literature, a realization that extricated him from servitude in his uncle's bookshop. With images he composed in his spare time, Helmut approached the head of Wiesbaden's Art and Modeling School, Hermann Bouffier. The painter was impressed enough to offer the young aspirant an apprenticeship. Bouffier, apparently an experienced academic artist, in turn persuaded Helmut's aunt Helene to support her nephew's new interest. Heartfield's training in art soon began. The photomonteur later complained, however, that access to the master's lessons was limited. "When all the painting students, the Bouffier students, left, I was permitted to put away the pencils, all the pencils. I was no better than a cleaning lady," he recalled, with a certain degree of misogyny.[72] Helmut nonetheless acquired sufficient skills to produce a painting for his aunt Helene (fig. 1.7). The vertical composition of this work, anchored by a tree resembling a telephone pole in its upward thrust, depicts a caped figure ascending a path that runs along a brook. The rough and

lightly primed canvas gives this idealized landscape a hazy look, as if the figure and its surroundings lay lodged in a deep memory drawn upon for warm reassurance. The painting takes its name from the structure toward which this figure heads: *The Cottage in the Forest* (1907).

Unsatisfied with his painting apprenticeship, Helmut renewed his interest in advertising-slogan competitions and ultimately resolved to study the burgeoning field of applied graphic art.[73] In 1908 he won admission to Munich's Royal Academy of Applied Art, where, for four years, he studied with some of the country's best-known graphic designers and poster artists.[74] In 1912 he completed his first professional commission, designing the cover for an anthology of his father's writing (fig. 1.8). Held had died in 1908 in a poorhouse under the linked burdens of penury and insanity.[75] The book cover's bird, which bears the breasts of a mammal, and the decorative waves cresting around the hybrid creature, show Helmut's lingering pathos for his father. But they also demonstrate his full engagement with the biomorphic forms of *Jugenstil* that then dominated the Munich art scene and his art teachers' images. For the time being, the image provided a suitable vehicle for the painful childhood feelings one may infer in the painting for his aunt.

Helmut's skills were now strong enough to earn him a job at Mannheim's Bauer Brothers paper-packaging plant in 1912.[76] Accepting this job was a key decision in his young career. Although he had initially fashioned himself as a fine-arts painter, his study of applied graphic design now gave him the opportunity to apply his skills to packaging intended to lure consumers.

Though financially successful at the age of twenty-one, Heartfield apparently grew tired of his conditions, finding both his job and Mannheim limiting. By the autumn of 1913 he was enrolled once again as a student, this time with a fellowship in the country's newly reorganized Charlottenburg School of Applied Arts in Berlin. This institution housed Germany's only academic chair for advertising design.[77] The occupant of this seat was the famous advertising artist and industrial designer Ernst Neumann, who, with a dedicated circle of colleagues, sought to transform advertising design into a fully recognized and modernist art form. In keeping with this goal, the program called for students to draw from sculptures and live models as well as to train in graphic arts and slogan making.[78] Heartfield excelled in his studies and was soon working directly for Neumann in the master's Berlin studio. Among his known achievements are a wall frieze for the automotive section of Cologne's groundbreaking 1914 Werkbund exhibition, and his semifinalist design for a book on the new Werkbund-inspired advertising ethos.[79] The second of these images, with its passionate torch-bearing figure breaking through the surrounding frame, demonstrates how Heartfield was now absorbing the visual vocabulary of expressionism (fig. 1.9).

The book—edited by one of Neumann's close collaborators, Paul Rubin—was essentially a manifesto for the modernist advertising ethos pursued by Neumann's circle.[80] Heartfield's contribution seems to have met this charge by approximating a political campaign poster rather than a publication advertisement, as one can see in its contrast to four of the other entries (fig. 1.10). In Heartfield's picture, the flaming


DIE
REKLAME
WIRD ZUR
KUNST und WISSENTSCHAFT
WENN SIE MIT ETHISCHEN
MITTELN DIE WAHRHEIT
VERKÜNDET
10
PREIS-AUSSCHREIBEN
Die Reklame wird zur Kunst und Wissenschaft, wenn sie mit ethischen Mitteln die Wahrheit verkündet.
Paul Ruben.
Den Schülern der Kunstgewerbeschule Charlottenburg (Abteilung Reklamekunst) unter Leitung von Ernst Neumann wurde die Preisaufgabe gestellt, dieses Motto zu illustrieren. Von zwanzig Entwürfen konnten zehn prämiiert werden und zwar: zwei 1. Preise, zwei 2. Preise, sechs 3. Preise.
Die verehrlichen Mitglieder der „Freien Vereinigung" werden gebeten, bis zum 1. April 1915 auf Grund der vorstehenden Illustrationen die Verteilung der Preise festzustellen. Erster Preis 100 M., zweiter Preis 50 M., zehn Preise freie Mitgliedskarte nebst allen Rechten für Mitglieder.
Maßgebend – Anzahl der richtigen Lösungen. Entscheidend bei gleichartigen Einsängen das Los. Zuschriften erbeten an die
„Freie Vereinigung für Reklame-Kunst und -Wissenschaft"
zu Händen des Herrn PAUL RUBEN, Charlottenburg 4.

Fig. 1.9
John Heartfield (signed "Herzfeld"), finalist entry for a poster competition with the theme *Die Reklame wird zur Kunst und Wissenschaft wenn sie mit ethischen Mitteln die Wahrheit Verkündet* (Advertising becomes art and science when it proclaims the truth with ethical means), in Paul Ruben, ed., *Die Reklame. Ihre Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Berlin: H. Paetel, 1914), 2:6, image 10. Art & Architecture Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

torch, the gesturing figure, and the moralizing text, "Advertising becomes art and science when it is pursued with the ethical means of truth," almost completely displace the book itself (partially visible in the upper right corner). The artist's soon-to-be-famous political passions seem already to have struck upon an expressive visual idiom that exceeds the optical force of the abstracted surf, firing cannon, assembled family, and hieroglyphic hand drawn by his student competitors.

But the coming Great War would be the event that fully stoked and shaped these passions. From that point forward, Heartfield would ply these "ethical means of truth," not through modern advertising but through small and often unsettling acts of defiance. These gestures would eventually find pictorial expression in anti-advertisements of found text and images. The most important of these found pictures would be photographs. In the photomontage he subsequently developed, Heartfield found a vehicle for merging his training in advertising with his spirited opposition to the war, creating a form of agitating and tendentious photography that Tucholsky ultimately praised. This transformation would occur as Heartfield slowly reached two seemingly paradoxical conclusions: that photography was the best means to reveal the harsh reality of his moment, but that it could never, at least in its current form,

duplicate the unspeakable terror of mechanized war. His training in advertising and his consciously performed temperament would ultimately enable him to generate a new sort of photography precisely from these apparently contradictory conclusions.


Die Reklame wird zur Kunst und Wissenschaft wenn sie mit ethischen Mitteln die Wahrheit verkündet.
DIE REKLAME
WIRD ZUR KUNST UND WISSENSCHAFT WENN / SIE MIT ETHISCHEN MITTELN DIE WAHRHEIT
DIE REKLAME wird zur Kunst und Wissenschaft wenn sie mit ethischen Mitteln die Wahrheit verkündet

Fig. 1.10
Four of the other nine competing designs in a poster competition with the theme *Die Reklame wird zur Kunst und Wissenschaft wenn sie mit ethischen Mitteln die Wahrheit Verkündet* (Advertising becomes art and science when it proclaims the truth with ethical means), in Paul Ruben, ed. *Die Reklame. Ihre Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Berlin: H. Paetel, 1914), 2:10, images 6–9. Art & Architecture Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

2

POSTCARDS TO THE FRONT AND THE ROAD TOWARD PHOTOMONTAGE

1915–1916

TOWARD THE END OF 1916, AS EUROPE'S GREAT WAR FELL FURTHER INTO A BARBARIC battle of attrition, Helmut Herzfeld's younger brother, Wieland Herzfelde, received a package while serving at the western front. Like the soldiers serving at his side, Wieland might have expected his parcel to contain the food and mementos that families regularly sent their warrior relatives to bolster morale. Herzfelde's box certainly bore the signs of familial tenderness. "I very much enjoyed the graceful manner with which the field address was written and the care with which everything was packed," he later recalled.[1] But Herzfelde knew that the carefully prepared package could not have come from his parents, who had died eight and five years earlier. And given his fierce antiwar commitment, he scarcely expected something to shore up his fighting spirit.

What he opened was in fact a parcel sent by his good friend George Grosz, a nearly misanthropic painter who had begun mailing vaguely antimilitarist gifts to the front in order to annoy soldiers and encourage like-minded friends.[2] Herzfelde's box, for example, contained

> two starched shirt-fronts, one white and one with a floral pattern; a pair of black sleeve protectors; a dainty shoe horn; a set of assorted samples of tea, whose individual hand-written labels claimed that the teas would inspire "Patience," "Sweet Dreams," "Respect for Authority," and "Loyalty to the Royal Family." [In addition and] haphazardly glued to a cardboard were advertisements for hernia belts, fraternal song books, and fortified dog food, labels from schnapps and wine bottles, photos from illustrated papers—all clipped at will and assembled absurdly.[3]

As exemplified by the genteel clothing, so vastly inappropriate for the blood-soaked front, and the magical teas that offered both nutritional and ideological sustenance, Grosz's pastiche of advertisements offered a double meaning whose irony no soldier at the time would miss. The hernia-belt advertisement promoted corporeal maintenance at a time when soldiers were returning home with large portions of their bodies shot away. The promotion for fortified dog food circulated as the British blockade of Germany's ports was driving many of its citizens toward starvation. Soon the country's public would suffer the hungry "Turnip Winter" of 1917.[4] The fraternal songbook was almost certainly loaded with ultrapatriotic hymns; such collections had been assembled by associations of right-wing college students, who constituted some of the war's most fervent supporters.[5] What Grosz conveyed with this assortment of gifts and the accompanying collage was not just an absurdist regurgitation of his country's wartime commercial kitsch, but the sense that a great gap yawned between the patriotic message these items purported to carry and the conditions of frontline combat they helped to obscure. Herzfelde quickly grasped his friend's message, noting "the great pleasure" he took "in the irony with which [Grosz] had selected the gifts."[6]

As the early twentieth century's advancing technology devoured a seemingly limitless supply of human flesh on the war's extended fronts, Germany's interwoven administrations of military policy, social welfare, and commercial culture fed their constituents with visions of jolly perseverance and national pride. The items in Grosz's parcel thrust those mirages back to the front, where, in uncomfortable incongruity, they made a deeply subversive statement. Indeed, the gaps and fissures lying between the cut-and-pasted advertisements of the enclosed cardboard themselves operated as a metaphor for the great disjunction between the country's general understanding of its war and the soldiers' traumatic experience of it. Soon, Grosz and young Helmut Herzfeld would use a similar strategy of irony and provocation on postcards, which they mailed to the front without the protective shield of a parcel box. And on these small pieces of correspondence, "photograph clippings," as Herzfelde later recalled, "had been assembled such that they said in pictures what would have been censored had it been said in words."[7] Much as Grosz had done in his care packages of scavenged kitsch, he and Heartfield now assembled appropriated photos in order to highlight the perceptual cleavages of wartime Germany and thereby telegraph their subversive discontent with the conflict. They had learned, in other words, to make formal ruptures pried between photographs say more than the loquacious prints themselves. This knowledge not only enabled the men to communicate censorable messages in a period of coerced consent, but it also led Herzfeld—soon to be Heartfield—toward a critical photomontage process with which he would digest the subsequent Weimar period's social chaos.

This chapter considers Heartfield and Grosz's possible postcard missives, known to us today only through descriptions, in order to explore the cultural conditions that pressed these men to make photography communicate more aggressively. The final result would be avant-garde photomontage. In making this argument, I suggest that

sometime within the first two years of World War I, the determination of Germany's government and military to restrain the power of representation, particularly in photography and film, essentially rendered these media obsolete. Interdicted and ultimately unable to represent the extremes of the war as they were then being experienced, Germany's visual culture became increasingly bereft of meaning. Provoked by this shortcoming, artists like Grosz and Heartfield stepped into the breach and tried to wrest meaning from given photographs with astonishing new procedures and forms. The result, they hoped, would shock viewers by exposing them to the war's horrors and appalling inequalities.

The conditions underlying this struggle over representation were quite dramatic and thoroughly unprecedented. News of abrupt changes in the conflict's course provoked near-physical shock, as panicked citizens sensed that the country's destiny hung in the balance. Britain's naval blockade created mass hunger and social breakdown even in Germany's most prosperous cities. Mechanized warfare produced mass death on endlessly extended front lines. Lining the trenches that defined these fronts were machine guns, tanks, flamethrowers, and propelled grenades that compressed traumatic battle experiences into seemingly ruptured and overlapping time frames. Meanwhile, the country's massively expanded photographic culture offered soothing images of happy warriors and traditional visions of domestic solidarity. It is here, in the gap between representation and experience, that Heartfield and Grosz reportedly intervened with their postcards, appropriating and juxtaposing ameliorative photographs in order to wrest from these images the unsettling reality they were meant to cloak.

Berlin's avant-garde photomontage essentially began, therefore, where the intense need of artists to resist the war met the photograph. In Heartfield and Grosz's subversive postcards, action and emulsion converged in the sort of disquieting photographic arrangements that Tucholsky had called for in 1912. What resulted were images surpassing the already powerful woodworker's union photographs. Thus the crisis that ultimately stimulated this type of photographic juxtaposition was not, as it turned out, one of horrific labor conditions. Rather it was the great disjunction drawn between the representation of war and its lived reality. In this context, the act of forcing the gaps between juxtaposed images to operate as *formal* signals of absurdity, as Herzfelde later described this procedure, came to communicate what the individual photographs had specifically occluded.

In order to trace the development and significance of Heartfield and Grosz's pictorial response, this chapter recovers the visual culture they were probably seeking to contest and subvert—namely the "hurrah kitsch" generated by the war's burgeoning photographic culture. It further considers the strategies of resistance that Heartfield, Grosz, and Herzfelde devised to undermine the regime of coerced consent that this pictorial culture sought to enforce. Central to this discussion is the men's sudden realization that photography, particularly at this historically defined moment of crisis, possessed two fundamental faults for those interested in deploying its testimonial force: first, that the meaning of any one print is fluid and utterly dependent on its context and, second, that a photograph can never be identical to that which

it claims to represent. This representation fluidity and difference, highlighted by the pressures under which photography was then being placed, spurred the technique of compensation we have come to call photomontage.

POSTAL EXCHANGE AND FORMAL INVENTION

Discussing Heartfield and Grosz's subversive wartime postcards is necessarily a speculative affair given that none of these early works survive. Yet the story of these missives, as Herzfelde's account suggests, provides an important entrée into Heartfield's initial work with the assembly of photo fragments. Heartfield himself repeatedly stressed these postcards in recollections through the 1960s. In a 1966 East German radio interview, for example, he reported that they had played a fundamental role in the "invention" of this avant-garde practice:

> In Moscow I told [Sergei] Tret'iakov about earlier works, which I made along with other people, and which put me on the path toward the invention of photomontage—if you want to call it that. Those works were postcards which we soldiers—not only I . . . [but above all] soldiers—[often] made to convey their messages to relatives back home covertly, so to speak. They were glued postcards.[8]

Though Heartfield's halting delivery probably reflects the consequences of a 1927 physical assault and old age, his account affirms Wieland's suggestion that strategically arranged photos could communicate in images what would have been censored in words.[9]

Important here too is Heartfield's mention of Sergei Tret'iakov, the Russian avant-garde polymath whom he befriended in January 1931. Tret'iakov played a singularly important role in affirming photomontage's origins in wartime postcards. His 1936 monograph on Heartfield, the first book to be published on the photomonteur, begins with an epigrammatic quotation from a talk that Heartfield delivered at Moscow's Polytechnic Institute in 1931:

> The censor in the war years prohibited the expression of anti-imperialist ideas, particularly in written form. The soldiers at the front therefore grasped for all possible tricks to report their life in the trenches to dependents back home, many of whom were anesthetized by chauvinist ideas. One had to point out the yawning chasm between life on the front and the life of the bourgeois free-loaders. Among other things, the soldiers glued together photographs and various magazine clippings to contrast, for example, heroes who had fallen for the homeland with pictures from magazines illustrating the life of capitalist parasites. Two—three sharp, striking words amplified the thought. Nothing further. That was the beginning![10]

Like Herzfelde, Tret'iakov suggests—through Heartfield's voice—that homemade postcards highlighted the "yawning chasm" between these two experiences of war.

By focusing attention on the interstices between photographs and, therefore, on pictorial interruption, montaged postcards could visually communicate the shocking inequalities of the conflict's lived reality yet still pass unsophisticated censors.[11]

These accounts by Herzfelde, Heartfield, and Tret'iakov provide useful insight into early politically oriented avant-garde photomontage by positioning postcards as the catalyst that transformed acts of resistance into subversive images. But their statements, dating from the late 1930s and the early 1960s, also suggest something that could only be implied in the culturally stifling moments of Stalinist Russia and cold-war East Germany: that postcards enabled a powerful merger of popular and avant-garde visual idioms. These small missives, the men indicate, provided a useful means of disseminating antiwar messages to soldiers discontented with the conflict. But to pass watchful military eyes unnoticed, these exchanges between intimates demanded a coded pictorial language based on appropriation, cutting, juxtaposition, and irony. These were, of course, precisely the techniques recently adopted both by Europe's avant-garde and (as we will see) by the continent's mass visual culture, particularly in the realm of modern advertising.[12] Thus, the postcards of World War I delivered cutting-edge art procedures and advanced forms of visual culture to everyday users who were aching to express the shocking extremes and inequalities of their wartime experiences.

The German scholar Eckhard Siepmann insightfully summed up this prospect in his 1977 anthology on Heartfield. "The principle of photomontage," he explained,

> is as old as the photograph itself and the principle of collage; the incorporation of multiple realities—or photo fragments—into the handmade picture assembly lay in the air during those years. At this time, montage and collage were already surfacing as a fragmentation of reality in the postcard industry, in advertising, in journalism, and also in the visual language of the French and Italian avant-garde (cubism and futurism). For Grosz and Heartfield, however, this visual fragmentation came at a particularly decisive moment. For them, the montaged visual space became the appropriate answer to what the war and—beside this—daily existence in the big city had done to atomize the apparitional experience of a coherent life and world. But the legend entwining itself around their discovery of collage as a separate artistic procedure already suggests this subsequent development; once Heartfield and Grosz saw collage as an answer to their shattered times, it emerged as a means by which one could express social contrasts through postal correspondence between the front and the homeland, expressions which in a verbal form would have fallen victim to the censor. The step from cubism and futurism forward, therefore, is one where a stress on the disparity of single elements becomes the emulation of social disparities, social contrasts.[13]

Montage already streamed through the avant-garde, as a formal investigation of representation. It also coursed through popular culture, where it was deployed for amusement or attention-grabbing sales pitches. Moreover, both fields employed montage to express modernity's seemingly overlapping, harried, and fragmented reality, a factor Siepmann slightly underplays. Yet the use of this technique to shock

and agitate with political messages had awaited the right moment. That instant arrived when the senseless chaos and gross inequalities of World War I suddenly allowed formal disparities and ruptures to suggest social ones.

It is then, as Siepmann explains, that the postcard came to serve as an important vehicle for montage's political-aesthetic deployment. On these small missives, consumers could contrast public and personal visions of war in elliptical statements that bordered on open declarations. Such semiprivate gestures of wartime defiance, therefore, may have prompted the highly trained artists Grosz and Heartfield, along with masses of amateurs, to record their epoch's jarring disjunctions using the formal and thematic clefts thrown open by photographic assemblies. Manipulated picture postcards, in other words, may have sowed the seeds of a politically inflected and formally ruptured avant-garde photomontage available to everyday users.

In considering the degree to which Heartfield and Grosz's postcards figured in such a development, it is important to recall the practice that immediately preceded them. Grosz had sent Wieland Herzfelde a care package that was essentially an assemblage whose seemingly random contents had been appropriated and contrasted as representative of the moment's jarring chaos and incongruities. Reassigned meaning through juxtaposition or satirical labeling, Grosz's tea, for example, promised not nutritional but ideological sustenance for warriors. Similarly, in the collage of advertisements, "clipped at will and assembled absurdly," Grosz deployed a compositional procedure that, as Siepmann argues, transformed an avant-garde "stress on the disparity of single elements" into "the emulation of social disparities, social contrasts."

Yet what would happen when the men applied the same procedure of absurd disruption to photographs? Conceivably it would produce the same sort of irony that Wieland had so appreciated in Grosz's parcel. But teasing both intended and unintended significations from the same photograph or set of photographs threatened to undermine the reason for using such images in the first place. Photographs ostensibly possessed a referential authority that could scarcely be accorded to commodities and their advertisements. But the ironic transformation of a photograph's meaning had the potential to fundamentally impugn this authority, thereby undercutting a viewer's confidence in the medium's ability to reference reality accurately. Therefore, in seeking to "to point out the yawning chasm between life on the front and the life of the bourgeois free-loaders," Grosz and Heartfield risked upsetting the very authority they hoped to harness as a means to reveal the moment's underlying truth. The challenge, then, lay in devising an alternative sort of photographic reference, one forged not just by the image's "photochemically processed trace causally connected to that thing in the world to which it refers," to borrow Rosalind Krauss's phraseology, but by the visible transformation of the object—the print—itself.[14] This transformation would occur through a physical assault whose trace mirrored the context that the seamless photograph could no longer capture in smooth emulsion.

In exploring the origins of Heartfield and Grosz's photomontage, therefore, it is important to investigate how and why they selected a physically abusive and disjunctive compositional formula that seemingly sprang from the very conditions

that the photos they manipulated had failed to represent. If we place the picture postcard at the kernel of such an investigation, as Herzfelde, Tret'iakov, Siepmann, and Heartfield did, than we can explore the relation between the experience of these conditions at disparate sites and the often subversive imperative to make photography represent those circumstances in a shocking manner.

THE POSTCARD AND THE WAR

If one reviews the history of postcards in Germany, Heartfield and Grosz's decision to use these small missives for their first tendentious photomontages seems nearly self-evident. In 1869 Austria became the first country to permit the mailing of postcards. In the other German-speaking countries, postal and moral authorities initially protested that the readily visible text on its face might be read by persons other than the intended recipient; nevertheless, postcards were permitted in the North-German Federation, Bavaria, Württemberg, and Baden one year later. The not-so-private status of the postcard's text promptly ceased to be a concern for the government and, indeed, defined one of the medium's primary advantages: the ability to coerce conviction between intimates.

During the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, this function became critical as the Prussian military strove to build approval for its conflict with France. The first maker of picture postcards, A. Schwartz from Oldenburg, devised the idea specifically with the war in mind; his designs, initially featuring a cannon flanked by laurel wreaths, quickly became a sensation that the Prussian government apparently encouraged. To send one of these cards was to voice support for the conflict both in image and in one's own easily intercepted text. To receive one was to feel the coercive push of an intimate's nearly public declaration of opinion. Other printing firms likewise began employing postcards to disseminate uplifting militarist images, expanding the repertoire of pictures and making the Franco-Prussian War the first conflict to see picture postcards produced on a mass scale.[15]

After this advent, the format continued to gain popularity. Increasingly affordable printing processes and low mailing costs made these often colorful pieces of correspondence almost as popular as the letters and blank postcards that already filled Europe's mailboxes. The size of postcards, moreover, matched that of the average photograph, making these small pieces of paper an ideal surface on which to print photographic images. Innovations in mass printing such as the halftone (1880), the more precise photogravure (1895), and the heliogravure (1910) cemented this relationship between the format and photography.[16] Shortly after 1895, Germany became Europe's greatest manufacturer and sender of picture postcards.[17]

George Grosz, born in 1893, maintained a particular fascination for these products. By the time he was a boy, their uncomplicated production and light subject matter made them a vehicle for some of popular culture's most inventive photographic images.[18] His archive in Berlin teems with examples he collected both before



Fig. 2.1
Ziegenhals in der Zukunft (*Ziegenhals in the Future*). Postcard. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.



Fig. 2.2
Prosit Neujahr! (*Happy New Year!*). Postcard. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.



Fig. 2.3
George Grosz, *Metropolis*, 1916–1917. Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. Photo: Namitallah/Art Resource, NY. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

and during the war.[19] In some of these cards, flying arrays of modern technology (fig. 2.1) or gaggles of beer-drinking buddies (fig. 2.2) are composed from photographic fragments to create eye-catching fantasies. Such compositions inspired Grosz's own early drawn and painted work, particularly in their oddly futuristic use of dynamically disjunctive spaces and image fragments (fig. 2.3).

Heartfield was also engaged with picture postcards from an early point in his career. Through his training as an advertiser, he learned what Prussia's military had long understood: that these small missives provided a convenient and effective way to distribute publicity to large numbers of people at the private citizen's expense, a strategy that had become general practice before the war. Advertising postcards also carried the sender's implied endorsement. The world of commercial publicity amplified these many benefits by composing eye-catching visual schemes with photomontage, much as novelty printers had done in the pieces Grosz collected. Dresden's Odol mouthwash firm, for example, created a series of photomontaged postcards between 1901 and 1903 that had become canonical by 1913, the year Heartfield entered Germany's leading advertising degree program.[20] These works overlaid images of the company's distinctively shaped bottle on photographs of incongruously large buildings. Such arrangements created a perpetual shift of signification between the small manufactured bottle, which seemed suddenly monumen-





Fig. 2.4 (left)
Odol mouthwash postcard, 1901. Collection of Henriette Väth-Hinz. Courtesy of Werkbund Archive, Berlin. © GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Holding B.V.

Fig. 2.5 (right)
Odol mouthwash postcard. 1903. Collection of Henriette Väth-Hinz. Courtesy of Werkbund Archive, Berlin. © GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Holding B.V.

tal, and the monumental edifice, which became a singular advertising opportunity (figs. 2.4 and 2.5).[21]

Such cards emphasized the creative incongruity between the visual terms they used and the forms or spaces they recorded. For example, the *Prosit Neujahr!* card in Grosz's collection adheres photo fragments of drinking men to a painted train and background, combining the photorealistic with the clearly hand-drawn (fig. 2.2). The resulting disjunction suggests the men's hazy stupor and drunken misdirection. Similarly, *Ziegenhals in der Zunkunft* (*Ziegenhals in the Future*), likely a publicity plug for Ziegenhals, a small hamlet outside Berlin, assembles an impossible array of flying, walking, and wailing figures in a city square, each proposing an entirely different space through its dimensions, scale, and placement (fig. 2.1). The resulting formal and spatial disjunctions suggest a fantastic future where modern technologies furnish wholly new and disorienting modes of perception. The Odol postcards reduce such eye-catching ruptures to two basic, highly legible, but intentionally ill-fitting terms, creating with the bottle and each new space of exhibition a similarly antirealist assembly of photorealist parts.

The picture postcard's ubiquity, inventiveness, suitability to photography, and semipublic nature allowed it to remain an ideal venue for war propaganda once the 1914 conflict was declared. Moreover, the geographic separation of fighting men

from their families sparked the deployment of enormous quantities of these small agents of social binding. For this reason, Heartfield and Grosz surely saw postcards as an ideal surface on which to communicate their subversive discontent.

Each day of World War I saw, on average, 9.9 million pieces of correspondence sent from Germans to the front and 6.8 million pieces posted in return.[22] These letters, telegrams, postcards, and care packages helped sustain soldiers during the impossibly long rotations they served in combat.[23] Correspondence from home, therefore, "was read, read again, and read ten more times," as one soldier, Valentine Strohschnitter, noted in his diary.[24] That the military's High Command recognized the significance of this treasured bond was affirmed by a postwar postal report: "The morale of troops serving in the field is most strongly influenced by their spiritual bond with the homeland. . . . The uplifted mood that reciprocal contact with the homeland generates, strengthens the heart well."[25]

Well over half of these pieces of valued correspondence were postcards, and a good many of these sported *photomontaged* images, which had become a popular novelty even before the conflict.[26] Heartfield and Grosz's missives, along with those of fellow saboteurs, would have formed a tiny portion of an enormous photomontage count and might easily have been overlooked by the censors' unworldly and weary, text-oriented eyes. Nonetheless, the men's disjunctive images would have been fundamentally different from the normative photomontage of wartime postcards.[27]

That norm was defined by the ideal of national unity, the most common theme trotted out to maintain enthusiasm for the long and difficult conflict. The government and the armed forces persistently claimed that only if the country's military and its determined populace worked arm in arm could they win their war of "national defense." Visions of frontline fighters and of noncombatant citizens at home therefore had to convey the steely determination of a shared endeavor. Under this all but coerced rubric, Germans at home and on the battlefield had to be seen as tightly bound in common, but limited, suffering. The home population was thus shielded from exposure to the true frontline conditions, lest they be dispirited by visions of grossly unshared sacrifice and horrific violence. This cocoon of perceptual ease left noncombatants woefully ignorant of the war's gruesome extremes.[28] By necessity, therefore, approved photomontages had to depict the front and the homeland as a seamless entity. Everyone, these images suggested, fought the same conflict and experienced the same conditions.

To win postal acquiescence, then, photomontaged cards had to close the distances and differences between domestic and frontline spaces. One card, for example, wraps home and battle-line images in the singular spirit of Christmas. Captioned "Christmas, at home and in the field," it juxtaposes the image of a mother inducting her son into the cult of Prussian militarism with another of the father fighting for "peace" (fig. 2.6). These smoothly montaged scenes thereby articulate an assurance of shared—though melancholic—festivity. Germans, the card asserts, maintain such complete unity that they can seamlessly meld their outwardly incongruous ceremonies: a domestic Christmas can be comfortably celebrated on the front, while

youthful military prancing is suitable for the family living room.

In forging such messages, these postcards studiously avoided the jarring thematic and compositional disjunctions that so excited Grosz in prewar postcards and that often surfaced in those that Heartfield studied. The Christmas card, for instance, goes to great lengths to blend the two photographs and, by extension, unify the distinct experiences they represent. Invisible touchup paint glazes the seams between these fragments, much as the smooth and translucent sugary surface of a candy cane joins red and white bands into one delectable unit. This "glazing"—a thin, almost invisible, but glistening layer—aims not only to join the potentially disjunctive images but to mask jarring juxtapositions with a confection-like allure.

In this case, the postcard's very composition reinforces the glazing's honeyed effects. The soldiers' abutting elbows echo the line formed by the mother's and son's arms. Similarly, the boy's flag mirrors the father's shotgun, while the glow of the



Fig. 2.6
Weihnachten daheim und im Felde. Herzliche Weihnachtsgrüsse (*Christmas at Home and in the Field. Merry Christmas*). Postcard, ca. 1916.



Fig. 2.7
Herzliche Weihnachtsgrüsse (*Merry Christmas*). Postcard, ca. 1916. Deutsches Historisches Museum (DHM), Berlin.



Fig. 2.8
E. Bieber (imperial house photographer), *Kaiser Wilhelm II., Ereignisse der Regierungszeit spiegeln sich im Antlitz des Kaisers* (*Emperor Wilhelm II: Events Taking Place under His Reign Reflect Themselves in the Kaiser's Countenance*). Postcard, 1913. Collection of the author.

Christmas tree is repeated in the beatific luminosity surrounding the relaxed fighters. The feminine counterpart to this card (fig. 2.7) features an analogous repetition of vertical forms defined by the burning candles on both Christmas trees, the spike on the soldier's helmet, the upright rifle at his side, and the curious gift *Wurst* he proudly holds aloft. This last savory item was of course delivered through the sort of care package that Grosz parodied in the parcel he sent Herzfelde in 1915. Still lying on the soldier's lap, this package overflows with further Christmas foods meant to nourish his physical strength and fighting spirit. The vision also testified to the purported effectiveness of Germany's frontline postal service in delivering domestic comforts to the field.

In both of these Christmas postcards, the only things separating the glazed and tightly linked photo fragments are the abstractions of geography and longing, the very distances these cards seek to highlight and then gently ameliorate. Such photomontaged images were meant to cohere both thematically and spatially, surprising

viewers not with the unbelievability and disparity we have come to associate with photomontage, but with a coherence that belies their use of disparate fragments. As a consequence, the meaning of each element coordinates with and amplifies that of the other, as if the glazing were also an efficient conductor of direct signification.

Photomontaged propaganda postcards in Germany had developed this approach to melding disparate photographic fragments even before the war demanded they do so. The Prussian royal house itself made great use of such joining, smoothing, and sweetening when it spun an endless series of cards in 1913 to mark the Kaiser's twenty-fifth jubilee.[29] The resulting compositions combine heroic photo-realist portraits of the monarch with views of his palace or the Prussian landscape. One particularly sophisticated montage, realized through photo-based lithographs, composes the Kaiser's visage from an array of images showing the country at work and in the process of military preparation (fig. 2.8) This and similar montages suggested that the Kaiser was the embodiment of Germany's industrial and military prowess, a unifying figure in whom the nation's great diversity cohered with effortless and productive beneficence.

This glazing effect had been available since the early days of photography, as paper and then glass negatives allowed the printing of multiple negatives on the same light-sensitive surface. Oscar Rejlander and his wife, Mary, famously pioneered this approach in their grand 1857 composition *The Two Ways of Life* (fig. 2.9). In



Fig. 2.9
Oscar and Mary Rejlander, *Two Ways of Life*, 1857. Science & Society Picture Library, London.



Fig. 2.10
E. Lorson and F. Ginsonie, *Jubilee Tableau of the "Société Fédérale de Gymnastique,"* 1898. Museum Ludwig (Sammlung Agfa), Cologne. Photo: Kunst- und Museumbibliothek/ Rheinisches Bildarchiv.

this work, the temporal and allegorical unfolding of two distinct moral destinies appear smoothly on a single print. Two French studio photographers, E. Lorson and F. Ginsonie, achieved a notably continuous effect in their *Jubilee Tableau of the "Société Fédérale de Gymnastique* in 1898 (fig. 2.10). This medium-size print, like similar ones from Germany, arranges full-body portrait photographs of the society's many members in an open glade, where the various events of their celebration take place simultaneously. The use of the word *tableau* in the title suggests a frozen scene in which these distinct events and personalities are folded into one consistent image. The composition correspondingly takes on a nearly dreamlike quality as a painstakingly applied glazing smooths and coheres the vast disparities between individual pictorial moments and spaces.

Studios serving Germany's armed forces famously made great use of this technique, incorporating prints of individual soldiers or cadets into preprinted, cabinet-size, and symbolically rich tableaux. These prints provided souvenirs of a soldier's service, fit to be displayed in the family salon. A 1909–1910 example entitled *In Memory of My Period of Service* features three figures with slightly different body

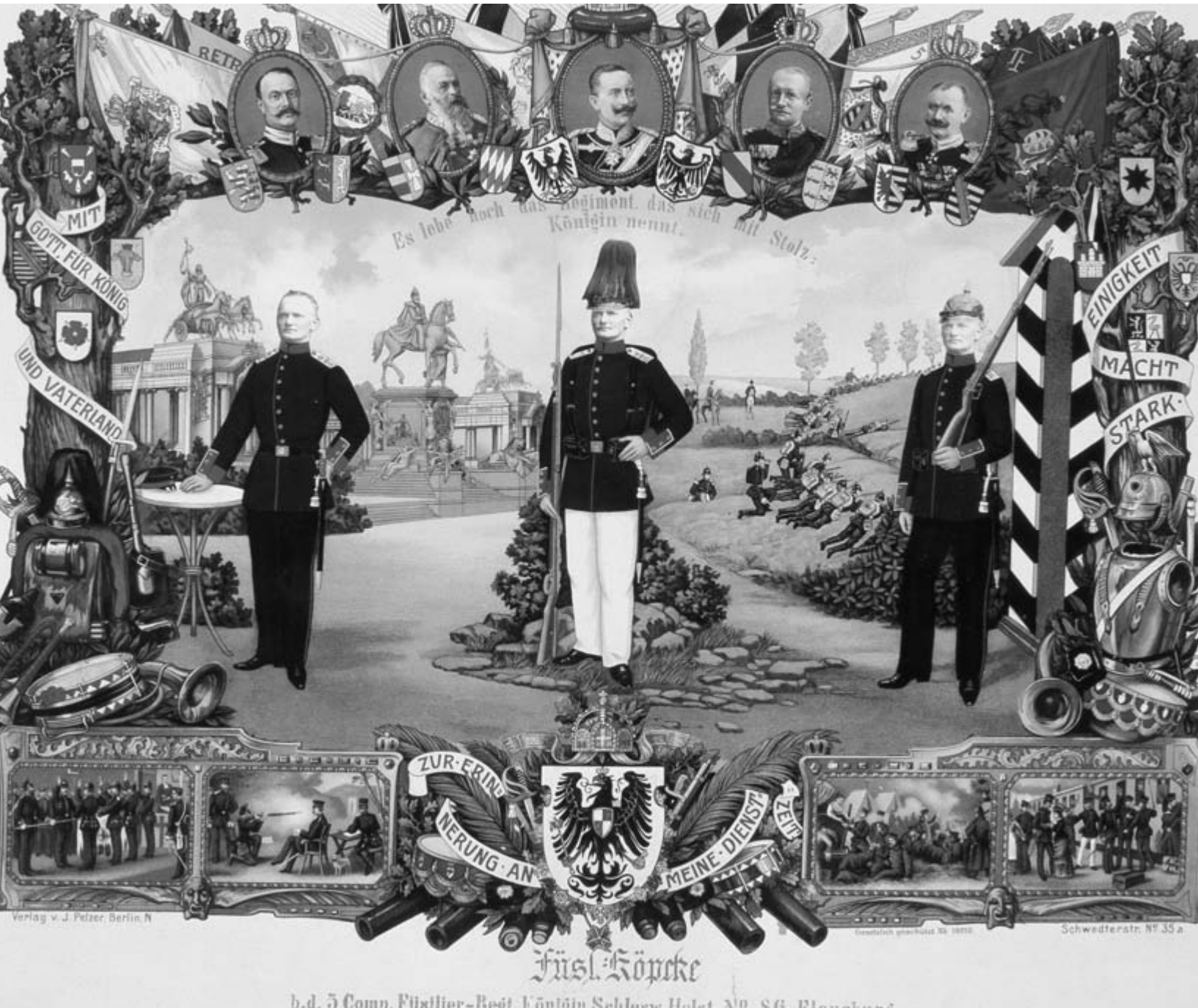


Fig. 2.11
Verlag J. Pelzer, *Zur Erinnerung on meine Dienstzeit (Köpke)* (*In Memory of My Period of Service*), Berlin, 1909–1910. Museum Ludwig (Sammlung Agfa), Cologne. Photo: Kunst- und Museumbibliothek/Rheinisches Bildarchiv.

types and distinct uniforms yet each bearing the same photographed face: that of rifleman Köpcke (fig. 2.11). Beneath them/him rest standard scenes of war and military pageantry, while, above, the Kaiser and other attendant monarchs float in cameos. As the dreamlike landscape recedes into a row of grandiose memorials and crouching riflemen, Köpcke stands three times at attention. Here the homemade quality of the glazing permits a strange incongruity between the photographic fragments and the painted composition. But the obvious ill fit of Köpcke's head on the colored bodies, coupled with his awkward triplication, is eased by the consistent landscape and the discursive glue of two tripartite references to unity. The banner climbing the heavily adorned tree at the right bears the words "Unity makes strength," while the banner on the left reads "With God for king and fatherland." Like the soldier's body, the words at the right affirm strength in unity, while those on the left evoke the trinity for whom the soldier fights.[30] This discursive rubric of union, of course, would serve heavily in the coming conflict's propaganda.

Once the war began and the drama of battle entered the popular imagination, printers reproduced such images on postcards, presenting fairy-tale landscapes of montaged soldiers overlooked by galaxies of royal family members. Such images avoided the messiness of war in favor of sanitized recollection. They also naturalized the military's hierarchy as a supernatural product of the cosmos. On a postcard from this time in Grosz's collection, a particularly fine glazing re-creates the bombing of London by convincingly adhering spaceship-like zeppelins over the British capital's darkened cityscape (fig. 2.12). Again—and in pointed contrast to *Ziegenhals in der Zukunft* (fig. 2.1)—this montage conveys an unusual coherence that belies its origin in disparate fragments.

Heartfield's surviving work from the years immediately following his and Grosz's subversive postcards demonstrates a near-singular focus on undoing this sweetly constructed and misleadingly homogenized vision of war. In compositions one can



Fig. 2.12
Die Themseanlagen und die City von London wurden ausgiebig mit Bomben belegt (*The Thames installations and the City of London were substantially covered with bombs*). Postcard. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

best describe as photo juxtapositions, he contrasted official images of the conflict with amateur pictures snapped at the front. The idea, he later explained, was to use photography's perceived veracity to undermine the omnipresent images that showed the war as sanitary and heroic. Approved "photos of the war," he later maintained, "were being used to support the policy to persevere when the war had long since been settled on the Marne and the German army had already been beaten."[31] As an example of this procedure, he cited a work he published seven years after the conflict's end (fig. 2.13):

> In the 1924 yearbook of the Malik Press [*A Place for the Worker!*; see fig. 6.19] there are two photos, one under the other, that show very well what I have said up to now about work with photographs. . . . Above is a picture showing a general from the command, how he is buried . . . with all that pomp. Then second, how the poor front soldier was buried in the place where grenades tore him apart, with lime thrown over him. The pictures then stand out with a striking good caption. So here are two juxtapositions above and below.[32]

Here Heartfield devised a manner not only to challenge the alluring and homogenized representation of war but to highlight the obscene disconnection between—in this case—an officially approved image of death and another that few citizens would ever see.

Photographs such as that of the general's burial were part of the elaborate propaganda apparatus established by Germany's government and armed forces shortly after the war's onset. Its most important component was an intentionally complex web of censorship offices administered by overlapping regional and military authorities that, as a whole, forced the country's illustrated magazines and postcard manufacturers to severely self-censor what they reproduced. To fill the gap created by this restraint, the press offices of the High Command and the Foreign Office offered a limited supply of "safe" photographs and photo opportunities. Thus, the only images available to satiate the country's thirst for war photographs were those created by authorities who specifically sought to hide the war's unprecedented barbaric extremes.[33]

In this climate, the loquacious camera became one of the most significant tools of silence. Had any commercial organization at the time published the amateur photograph that Heartfield used in the above photo juxtaposition, its print license would have been revoked and the individuals responsible could have faced jail time.[34] Intriguingly, Heartfield's juxtapositions responded to this misuse of photographs by employing the authority of one unmodified print to undermine that of another. This approach was distinct, however, from the more ruptured technique that Wieland Herzfelde described in Heartfield and Grosz's subversive postcards, which they used, as I will suggest, to throw off the censor's content-focused gaze. In those cases, the authority of the photographic images was largely impugned by compositional violence brought to bear from outside the images. Here would



Wie ein in der Etappe gestorbener General begraben wurde



Wie die an der Front abgeschlachteten Proletarier verladen wurden

Fig 2.13
John Heartfield (attributed), juxtaposition in *Platz dem Arbeiter* (Berlin: Malik, 1924), 41. The captions read, "How a general who died behind the front is buried" and "How proletarians massacred at the front were dispatched."

ultimately lie the perceptual dynamite of the pair's earliest photomontages, an analogue to the savagery of war that these images could not quite convey on their own or even through stark juxtaposition.

Outside of this approach, no one had found a way to represent the extremes of war adequately, at least in a manner that approximated the soldier's experience of them. In fact, these extremes were difficult to process perceptually even firsthand. Historian Klaus Latzel recalls the unimaginably violent hazards faced by Germany's warring men, many of whom reasoned that "to die from a bullet does not seem bad; in this way the pieces of our existence remain undamaged. But to be shredded, chopped into pieces, trampled into mush, is a fear that the flesh cannot bear."[35] One soldier told his family of his horror and disillusionment with the reality of the front: "Life is simply shit here. Absolute devastation surrounds us! . . . Here no song sounds, no happy hymn. Everything is exhaustion. Our beautiful enthusiasm, where has it gone?"[36] Such corporeal violence and deep destitution not only exceeded the capacities of contemporary representation but escaped the contemporary capacities of human perception itself.

Ultimately, on account of these practical and willful institutional obstacles to representing unprecedented war conditions, a vast gulf opened between the conflict that citizens saw at home and the fighting that soldiers experienced on the front. A family at home could scarcely understand the disillusion, physical hardship, and violence that even soldiers had a hard time processing and articulating. As a thirty-eight-year-old soldier named Stefan Schimmer wrote to his family in December 1914, "I'm not at all hungry. Can hardly eat anything because of voluminous sorrow and worry. I can't hold out another four months. *You have no idea how it is for me*. I'm totally destroyed."[37] Erich Marie Remarque wrote plaintively of this perceptual gap between already-traumatized soldiers and their distant families in his 1929 novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*. In the one pregnant interruption of the story's solidly martial narrative, his soldier-protagonist Paul Bäumer visits home:

> I imagined leave would be different from this. Indeed, it was different a year ago. It is I of course that has changed in the interval. There lies a gulf between that time and today. At that time I still knew nothing about the war, we had been only in quiet sectors. But now I see that I have been crushed without knowing it. I find I do not belong here any more, it [the narrator's hometown] is a foreign world. Some of these people ask questions, some ask no questions, but one can see that they are quite confident they know all about it [the war]; they often say so with their air of comprehension, so there is no point in discussing it. They make up a picture of it for themselves.[38]

According to Remarque's postwar reflections, not only had Germany's civilian population been woefully underinformed of the conflict's horrific extremes, but people at home simply invented a picture to augment the official one, which they instinctively knew to be incomplete. The war's approved photomontaged postcards demonstrated

how this willful self-deception could be maintained, literally instructing citizens in how to use available photographs to construct their personal vision of the conflict. Heartfield designed his photo juxtapositions specifically to thwart such instruction and dismantle or forestall these falsely coherent visions. His compositions sought to mark the colossal disparity between the fantasy world Bäumer finds at home and the unimaginable slaughter to which he must soon return.

The photo juxtaposition Heartfield cites as an example of his early work with appropriated prints (fig. 2.13) makes such disjunction a singular focus. Its captions read, "How a general who died behind the front was buried" and "How proletarians massacred at the front were dispatched." This staging not only highlights the war's unequally shared burdens but suggests that authorities had sought to distract the public from this imbalance with the more appealing pomp of high-rank mourning. That disparity is further amplified by the contrast between rows of upright rigid soldiers lining the general's final passage and horizontal piles of corpses being collected for mass burial. Even the tightly ordered circle of officers carrying the general's coffin becomes a shocking mess of bodies in the photograph below. Where the first image shows a coffin surrounded by mourners, the second shows soldiers at work, surrounded by death. This unfolding of an implied narrative inverts the thematic arrangement of the official photograph. Disparity, reversal, and inversion complement the composition's themes of silence and unveiling.

Heartfield intensified this type of visual confrontation in his 1917 juxtaposition *This is what a hero's death looks like* (fig. 2.14) These handwritten words, at the composition's center, suggest the kind of battlefield martyrdom praised by Prussia's military apparatus and depicted in numerous postcards throughout the war (fig. 2.15).[39] But in Heartfield's juxtaposition, the words ironically point to the true look of the supposedly valiantly fallen fighter. Here, images of torn and decaying corpses mark with flesh the distance between the reality of corporeal defeat and the fantasy of idealized heroism. The melodramatic and dreamy gaze of the dying solider in the postcard *Stolzenfels am Rhein!* (fig. 2.15) becomes (below) a cruelly severed head turning away from us, its eyes and temple shot away. Heartfield's placement of the photographs—an overview above, a detail below—contrasts mass death with individual passing, and armies of corpses with the expiration of the singular "hero."

Such contrasts offered a quick and efficient way to unveil the suppressed underside of war, exposing the vast distance between the combat's grisly reality and its official representation. But Heartfield could never have published such compositions on a mass scale. Nor could he have sent them through the post. The risk of being censored or arrested was simply too great. He did have another way to achieve this antiwar subversion, however, and here again lay the suitability of physically attacking appropriated images. Rather than contrast Germany's propaganda with the war's suppressed reality, he could literally disassemble misleading visions until the resulting disjunction delivered this message for him, emphasizing the gap between fiction and actuality. And the first tools he and Grosz devised for carrying out



Fig 2.14
John Heartfield, *So sieht der Heldentod aus* (*This is what a hero's death looks like*), ca. 1917. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

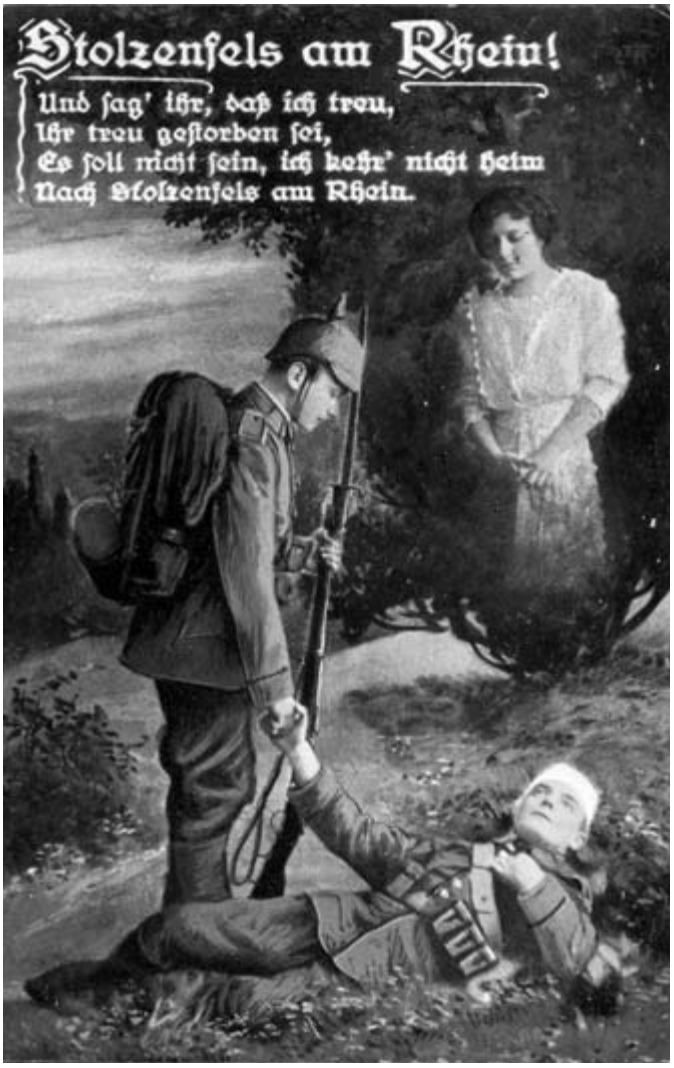

Stolzenfels am Rhein!
Und sag' ihr, daß ich treu,
Ihr treu gestorben sei,
Es soll nicht sein, ich kehr' nicht heim
Nach Stolzenfels am Rhein.

Fig. 2.15
Stolzenfels am Rhein! (*Stolzenfels Castle on the Rhine!*). Postcard, ca. 1916. The poetic caption reads: "And I declare to you that I am true, / That I died true to you, / It should not be, I will not return home / But to Stolzenfels am Rhein." Collection of the author.

this alternative strategy were the photomontaged postcards that he, Herzfelde, and Tret'iakov all mention in their writings.

There is, however, a larger function that this compositional rupture could serve. Not only might it dismantle the ameliorative and homogenized visions of war, the mass-glazing of the conflict's representation, as it were. It could also palpably convey the heterogeneity, discontinuity, and even madness that official images served to cloak. This was the case in the compositions Grosz and Heartfield collaboratively "assembled" three years later under the rubric of Dada, which may have resembled their wartime postcard photomontages. One of these later pictures, *Sonniges Land* (*Sunny Land*, late 1919; fig. 2.16), takes its name from a book of children's poems by Bruno Schönlank that Grosz was illustrating at the time. For Schönlank, the title connoted the world of everyday objects illuminated by the poet's careful attention. For the Dadaists, by contrast, it references the purportedly bright wartime world


DADA
„Nur am Rhein da will ich leben!"
Schwarz-Rot-Gold
Faust
Hinweg mit diesen Arbeiterräten!
Die Jungfrau Maria um Schutz Deutschlands angerufen

of Wilhelmine Germany, a territory "enlightened" by religious grace. At the upper left, a Red Cross postcard shows a delicate, Mary-like figure anointing what seem to be fallen soldiers. She touches one of their heads, reaching forward from an elevated throne behind which burns an eternal flame. Newspaper texts, slapped at an angle atop this image, interrupt the reverential tone with distinctly militaristic messages: "The [German] submarine—England's Death" and "He who is attired in civilian clothes is most guilty!" This second quote references the postwar *Dochstoßlegende,* or "stab-in-the-back legend," the notion that Germany lost the war not on the battlefield but at home, because of waning domestic resolve and the sort of sabotage practiced by Heartfield and Grosz. A clipped photograph of a fat cigar floats underneath, while farther down, an officer bearing the armed forces' highest medal, "Pour le Merité," and an Iron Cross tips leftward as if about to topple. These are the trappings of militarism, floating above and, thus, guiding the revisionist explanation of defeat. Another photo fragment, of the Kaiser dressed in *civilian* attire—perhaps the true backstabber?—similarly spins leftward, while another officer, to the right, peers proudly downward from behind his rack of medals. Next to him another Virgin reverentially brings her hands together as her glowing head tips downward, the caption "Wilhelm II" suggesting the imperial subject of her beneficence.

Further beneath these figures, a mass of newspaper clippings, stock listings, and advertisements run in various directions, yelling out their contents. Just to the right of God's mother is the headline "The Virgin Maria called to the protection of Germany." At the end of this headline lies a semicircular photo fragment showing gray-suited soldiers posing with people who seem to be family members. Do all of these people understand the war in the same way? Another family poses to the left, while below these kinfolk a postcard depicting a guardian angel has been transformed such that a top-hatted businessman nudges forward his young charge, who now sports a military cap and a long rifle. Complementing these religious-militarist transformations are the ration coupons and coins peppering the top portion of the composition. One of these printed tickets reads "soup," suggesting the meager rewards of state "support."

Grosz and Heartfield's *Sonniges Land* seemingly collects the photographic, textual, and material detritus of the war moment and remotivates it through satirical juxtapositions. But the meaning of the individual elements is just as profoundly disrupted by the compositional structure, which itself suggests the torment of the moment. Proud photographs of the military elite suddenly become not the agents of war but the subjects of the chaos that their conflict and its blaring propaganda generated. Perhaps even more than satire, this compositional conceit creates an alternative experience of the war itself: the High Command topples to the left and right, while screaming headlines are fired like arrows in multiple directions, shredding whatever continuity remains in any given fragment. The likely result of viewing this montage is deep disorientation provoked by an outright refusal of meaning.

Exacerbating this perceptual chaos are the various orientations of the toppling and shooting fragments, a jumble that forces the observer to spin the composition

Fig. 2.16
George Grosz and John Heartfield, *Sonniges Land* (*Sunny Land*), 1919. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

clockwise and counterclockwise, or just ratchet the head back and forth, to study the pasted detritus. The viewer must literally engage in a dizzying physical struggle with this already-ruptured mirroring of war propaganda to digest the montage's components.

In this and similar compositions, Heartfield and Grosz achieved far more than transforming the signification of selected war propaganda. They fashioned a viewing experience that re-creates the perceptual chaos and disorientation of wartime, the very instabilities these fragments were originally meant to right. This, then, was the larger perceptual disparity that such compositional rupture was meant to convey—not just the disjunction between the official representation and the actual experience of war, but the harried forms of perception that the heavily mechanized conflict had inaugurated. Thus, here lies the artists' attack on the larger social "spirit" of unity with which the war was waged.

Before the strategy deployed in their private postcards could become the very public form of Dada photomontage, however, Heartfield and Grosz would endure two more years of repressive wartime censorship. With expressions of dissent carefully monitored, they continued to devise strategies to convey the irony and shock of their postcards in formats that could reach far more people yet continue to elude watchful censors. In short order they managed to achieve this task using published drawings, typography, graphic design, and even film. But their course to this cross-media dissemination of shock ran not just over postcard surfaces but also through performance. In the following years, Heartfield developed a public persona with which he engaged in spectacular acts of disruption and resistance aimed at subverting the war's everyday course. These acts and the images that formed their equivalent were all key features of what came to be Heartfield, the performance.

3

HEARTFIELD
THE PERFORMANCE

1914–1917

ONE EARLY MORNING IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR'S SECOND YEAR, HELMUT HERZFELD prepared to declare himself insane. Forty-six days after Germany declared war on Russia, the young advertising artist had been unwillingly conscripted into military service. Since then he had undergone infantry training in the Neukölln district of Berlin, and now he was to be lined up with his unit and, barring any change of plan, sent to the front. His planned disclosure, intended to forestall this deployment, ultimately unfolded with a surprising twist. As his brother Wieland Herzfelde later recounted:

> At inspection call, the solitary infantry guard Herzfeld stepped out from his unit and, standing at attention, reported that he was mentally ill. The company leader then dared to crack a sardonic smile. And that put my brother into such a rage that two noncommissioned officers rushed to his side to restrain him and speak to him . . . until orderlies arrived, who . . . carefully led him away."[1]

In the three years that followed, Helmut would never serve at the front.

Reading this anecdote today, we might imagine that the freshly minted infantry guard experienced an unexpected nervous crackup far surpassing his planned protestation of illness. Facing the prospect of frontline battle and the likelihood of serious injury or even death, he had intended simply to pronounce himself mentally unfit. But as his plan progressed, the snide mocking of his commanding officer turned a stiff declaration into a wild demonstration.

But had Helmut Herzfeld genuinely snapped? The fact that the incident—as

reported by his brother—was set to take place the morning of his front-line deployment naturally raises suspicions. So too does his choice of a public setting. He had not, after all, opted to speak with his officer in private, nor had he arranged to send word through intermediaries. Could it be, then, that rather than going mad, he performed his madness?

This chapter proposes that the answer may be yes. In the years since he moved from Mannheim to Berlin, young Helmut—assisted by his brother—had built an artistic persona intended to impress his new bohemian friends with his stunning creativity. This carefully staged identity proffered a fragile young man ruled not by reason but by deeply authentic and uncontrollable emotions free of civilizing constraints. He had learned to act as an unbalanced Cassandra who sensed what others, blinkered by modern reason, could no longer perceive. The wild attack on his officer may be seen as part of a pattern that could be described as a performance of public identity, a conscious production in which apparent madness and uncontrollable responses played a key role.

The photomontaged postcards young Herzfeld composed with Grosz fit this pattern as well. Like the officer who triggered his aggression, the war and its gross misrepresentation spurred the former advertiser to attack—to cut up and rearrange appropriated pictures in order to telegraph the senselessness and brutality of the conflict to everyday citizens and soldiers. By staging this persona of the sensitive madman, he was soon able to explore powerfully unsettling modes of dissent across various media and through everyday modes of life.

At some point in this exploration, however, Helmut and his good friend George realized that they had to reach a far larger audience. The men had succeeded in conveying the war's trauma and disparities to the fellow infantrymen who had witnessed Helmut's crackup and the anonymous soldiers and individual friends who had received the duo's photomontaged postcards. But they would need to transform these techniques into a mass-reproducible equivalent if they would ever provoke a broad reaction against the conflict. Raging performance of the sort that Heartfield specialized in ultimately provided the key. And this, in turn, help set the stage for the international Dada movement's arrival in Berlin.

To chart this evolving relationship between performance and image, this chapter first discusses the constitution of Helmut's public persona around the time of the war's outbreak. It then steps out of the artist's head and analyzes the acts of vandalism and public rage—largely directed against the war effort—that he initiated as a boisterous performance of this new persona. It was not until he saw the unique drawings of George Grosz in 1915, however, that Helmut first learned how to give these acts a visual analogue. In the following two years, the men became close friends and managed, with the help of Wieland Herzfelde, to publish Grosz's drawings in the periodical *Die neue Jugend* (*New Youth*). Around the same time, Helmut topped his existing gestures against the war with the supremely subversive act of anglicizing his name in the midst of a brutal war against Britain. The production of John Heartfield and the images it spawned had begun.

MAD ABOUT ART

To a significant extent, the persona who would later be known as John Heartfield was the careful creation of the precocious young writer Wieland Herzfelde, the photomonteur's brother. When Heartfield reached Berlin in October 1913, Wieland, who was then still in high school (gymnasium) in Wiesbaden, worried that his older sibling might feel lonely in the large metropolis. In a remarkably confident gesture, the seventeen-year-old Wieland took charge of his brother's social integration by writing a letter to Else Lasker-Schüler, one of the country's best known contemporary poets, then living in Berlin.[2] Lasker-Schüler was closely associated with the avant-garde periodicals *Die Aktion* and *Der Sturm*, and she figured prominently in the cutting-edge art and literature promoted by these serials (fig. 3.1).[3] Her writing was passionate, emotive, and prone to self-indulgent flights of mysticism and exoticism. Her poetry in particular oozed a languid neurosis that seemed an irrefutable sign of creative authenticity. This made her verse tremendously appealing to Wieland and Helmut, who were busy creating similarly emotive art and developing artistic personas of their own, all heavily inspired by her example.[4]

The young men were enthusiastic fans. In fact, her pathos-ridden poetry had become so familiar to orphaned Wieland that in his thirty-six-page letter to her, he addressed her with the informal *du.* He similarly wrote in a deeply personal manner, describing his longing for his mentally ill father and bemoaning the absence of his similarly disabled mother. "I do not know what that is: mother. I never knew such a thing," he lamented.[5] He was clearly asking her to step into this role, to become an ersatz mother and provide a sort of comfort beyond that offered by her poetry. He also made an explicit request:

> I ask you for something else: write my brother. My brother could wish for nothing more beautiful from me. . . . He knows nothing of this letter. . . . Hellmuth [*sic*] may be 5 years older than me but he is shy, for his youth was hard and lonely. . . . I know that my brother is totally, totally alone in this big city and that he longs for a person who is not a stranger. Be this friend.[6]

The talented Wieland had composed a beautiful letter, framed within a larger tragic narrative in which he was the orphan of a once-famous poet and a psychologically crushed mother. With his strategically intimate mode of address and his skill at pronouncing his brother's loneliness, he was appealing precisely to Lasker-Schüler's aesthetic and emotional sensibilities. She was—perhaps not surprisingly—smitten and personally answered the young man's letter.[7]

Among other things, her response inquired into Helmut's appearance so that she might recognize him. Wieland responded with a brilliant, multipage description, larded with creative conceits and deep pathos, all designed to seduce the poet further:

> What my brother looks like? . . . Please be satisfied if I sketch him as an illustrator for the *Berlin Illustrated Magazine* would view him. You have surely seen him over the last eight



Fig. 3.1
Unattributed, portrait of Else Lasker-Schüler, ca. 1913.
© 2011 Else Lasker-Schüler–Gesellschaft.

weeks in the exhibition rooms of *Der Sturm* and perhaps in the evening readings held by *Die Aktion*. . . . My brother is small, the opposite of robust. . . . His upper-body is bent forward. . . . He walks with big steps. . . . His whole figure clearly shows that it knows no calm. . . . He can look and be grotesque, sad, high-spirited, violently tempered, but never profane, empty. He has perhaps only an average critical intellect but he also possesses a critical feeling of such strength and confidence, clarity and sensitivity, that it is reflected in his every movement, every glance, every position.[8]

This extraordinary description proffered Helmut as a diminutive artist ruled not by intellect but by a hypersensitivity expressed unreservedly through physical features and gestures. He was, in other words, a primal register of sensations who mediated perceptions overlooked by anesthetized observers. Wieland, meanwhile, positioned himself as more rational, as an objective, journalistic "illustrator" recording his brother's exact image.[9]

Wieland's later reports and lengthy teenage journal suggest that he and Helmut had been fashioning these complementary roles—rational intellectual and primal madman—since their turbulent childhoods. These personas formed the basis of their tight relationship and the deeply felt identities with which they first pursued literature and art, respectively. By this point in their early adult lives, Wieland's characterization of his brother was comprehensive enough to fill many letter pages and to serve a specific aim: to induce Lasker-Schüler to contact Heartfield and initiate a relationship with him. She soon did, and Helmut, in turn, visited her twice, most likely at her regular haunt, the Café des Westens.[10] From this point forward, the two brothers and Lasker-Schüler built a close friendship, particularly after Wieland moved from Wiesbaden to Berlin in May 1914. Their early artistic and publishing careers would receive an enormous boost from her support.

This new friendship also had a broader impact. Over the threshold of access offered by Lasker-Schüler, the personas that the brothers had fashioned in private now passed into a very public trial run, a staging. In fact, Wieland's multipage description of his brother formed the point of departure for his first published intervention in the world of expressionist literature. Using his brother as an implicit model, he fashioned a treatise on aesthetic creativity that he soon published as an article for *Die Aktion*. Its title was, quite significantly, "Die Ethik des Geisteskranken" (The Ethics of the Mentally Ill).

In these published pages, as in his letters to Lasker-Schüler, Herzfelde associated success as a creative artist with insanity. The demented, he explained, free themselves from the rational perception of reality and thereby forge a more natural and unrestrained relationship to the world around them. As a consequence, "the mentally ill man is artistically talented. His works show a more or less raw, indeed honest, feeling for the beautiful and the significant. Because his feelings deviate from ours, the forms, colors, and relationships of his work mostly appear to us as strange, bizarre, and grotesque: insane."[11] Unfettered by normalized modes of perception, the artist-madman can fully unfold the emotional consequences of perception and produce uniquely enlightening images. The "demonic character" warily discerned in the art of such people, Wieland explained, "can have a productive effect, an effect of abandon" that emotionally liberates its viewers as well.[12] This was his model for the new artist and the most impacting art.

Wieland expressed the hope that young creative talent producing from this raw and unrestrained sensorium would provoke a new ethical order based not on studied enlightenment, which uses reason "to free ourselves from the world's contingencies," but on a naïve openness to reality's raw impact. "In dreams we equal such a man in that: when a door slams shut as we sleep, we can hear cannons thundering, champagne corks popping, lamps exploding, hands clapping—but not at will. For in dreams we are still dependent on reality." The madman's and the artist's disposition to sense reality as a storm constitutes a "religion of the will," he wrote. "Only will can train sensation to potency" and thereby lead to a transformative aesthetic for modern audiences whose perceptual capacities have been dulled by rationalist modes of thinking.[13]

The ideas that Herzfelde put forth in his *Die Aktion* article were not new, but they did represent a creative synthesis of expressionist and futurist notions. His prizing of insanity as a sort of primal brilliance approximated expressionism's foregrounding of madness, childhood, and "the primitive" as authentic sites of artistic creativity unsullied by academic training or commercial materialism. Like Wieland, the most notable members of this movement, largely participants in Munich's *Der Blaue Reiter* (Blue Rider) and Dresden's *Die Brücke* (Bridge), took Nietzsche as their intellectual mentor. In the philosopher's work, they saw an advocate for creative intelligence unencumbered by the rigidity of nineteenth-century positivism. In his essay, Wieland even invoked Nietzsche's syphilis-induced insanity as a model.[14]

Yet his suggestion that madmen accept uncontrollable contingencies and allow themselves—like light sleepers—to be traumatized by slamming doors, cannon



Fig. 3.2
Umberto Boccioni, *States of Mind I: The Farewells*, 1911. Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2011 The Museum of Modern Art; licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY.

thunder, and clapping hands strongly resembles Italian futurist thought. In fact, Wieland's diary of the time is rife with praise for this Latin movement. Through his subscription to the avant-garde magazine *Der Sturm*, he eagerly digested futurism, which found favorable review in the periodical and heavy display in its famous Berlin gallery.[15] Like his German fellows, Wieland embraced the group's praise for a traumatizing urban modernity marked by speed, industrial noise, confusing and overlapping time frames, and technologically generated phenomena, such as radio waves perceptible only to machines (fig. 3.2). The aesthetics of this crashing modernity, perhaps best realized pictorially by painter Umberto Boccioni, strongly influenced the majority of the artists who later participated in Dada, perhaps even more than the expressionism that Berlin Dada claimed as its nemesis. But this unique combination of expressionism's affinity for the mentally ill and futurism's praise for modern trauma ultimately came to characterize Heartfield's public persona and his art.[16]

In fact, already in these early years, Herzfelde had essentially dethroned Nietzsche and proposed his own brother as the model for this new artist, particularly in his letters to Lasker-Schüler. This otherwise shy man who held "an average critical intellect" but sustained "a critical feeling of . . . strength and confidence, clarity and sensitivity," could potentially channel his wild-child sensibilities into singularly powerful images. Wieland cleverly summed up this prospect in his second letter to Lasker-Schüler: "I think that the movements of my brother's hands, when he is sunk in observation, when he is lost in thought, when he tries to explain something to someone, would produce wonderful futurist pictures, if it were possible to transfer these movements (visually) like temperature or air pressure variations."[17] Here Wieland suggests that Heartfield's purported inability to articulate verbally forced a resort to wild physical gestures, which he imagined being recorded, à la Jackson Pollock, on the picture surface.[18] The compositionally disjunctive formula that Heartfield and Grosz later applied to appropriated photographs partly found its origins in this unique melding of expressionism, futurism, and dogged persona building.

Encouraged by the success of his article in *Die Aktion* and facing conflicts with his teachers in Wiesbaden, Wieland moved to join Helmut in Berlin. The brothers became regulars at the Café des Westens, where Lasker-Schüler invited them to join her circle of friends.[19] Like the siblings, most of these artists had consciously developed distinct personas through clever poetic invention or role playing. Salomo Friedländer, for example, cultivated a paradoxical antipersona by naming himself "Mynona"—the German word for anonymous, *anonym*, spelled in reverse. His complicated nonidentity spoofed the endless alter egos that the other regulars built for themselves.

In Lasker-Schüler's case, new personas arose as fulsome literary figures in her poetry. These she adopted as identities to inhabit, even signing a great deal of her correspondence at the time as "Prince Jussuf of Thebes," the peaceful antipode to the militarist German Kaiser. Her literary version of transgender drag allowed her to live out the passionate exoticism of her poetic inventions and to forge a protest against, or even remove herself from, the reality of Wilhelmine-era Germany.[20] Because Wieland and Helmut shared the poet's lust for reinvention and role playing, the younger brother immediately accepted Lasker-Schüler's early suggestion that he add an *e* to his last name. The new spelling was, as she later explained in a letter to him, more pleasing to hear pronounced. Typical of her dramatic acts, she initially made this suggestion indirectly, in a series of letters to Franz Marc that she published in the January 24, 1914, issue of *Die Aktion*.[21]

Three years later, by mid-August 1917, Helmut Herzfeld would make a far more radical change to his name, completing the construction of the persona on which he, Herzfelde, Lasker-Schüler, and ultimately George Grosz had long been collaborating. In doing so, they were initiating what Matthew Biro has recently described as Berlin Dada's radical identity politics, a notion of the modern self informed by machines and fragmentation, as well as insanity. By then, the Dadaist would be conceived as a particularly perceptive "new sensing mechanism."[22] But first, young Helmut created signature antiwar gestures that marked the most significant development of the performance we now recognize as John Heartfield.[23]

MAD ABOUT THE WAR

The conflict that led to the invention of this distinctly British-sounding persona effectively began on June 28, 1914. That day, the Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife, Sophie, climbed aboard their imperial coach after attending a reception at the Sarajevo town hall in Bosnia. Shortly thereafter, they were approached by a Bosnian-Serbian nationalist, who shot them both at point-blank range. As the archduke choked up blood and the duchess collapsed forward into unconsciousness, Europe began its run through a series of diplomatic triggers that resulted in World War I. First Austria declared war on Serbia. Then Serbia's ally Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary.





Fig. 3.3 (left)
War volunteers, August 1914. Reproduced in Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege!* (*War against War!*; Berlin: Verlag freie Jugend, 1924), 52.

Fig. 3.4 (right)
Haeckel Brothers, "Public announcement of the declaration of a 'state of war.'" *Illustrierte Kriegs-Zeitung—Das Weltbild*, no. 1 (August 1914).

Next Germany, bound by treaty to Austria-Hungary, declared war on Russia. By August 4, France and Britain had entered the conflict, prompted by their own treaty obligations. Europe, and soon additional continents, fell into a conflagration ignited less by simmering hostilities than by obscure clauses scribed in overlooked treaties of alignment. Thus, if warring governments were to seduce their nations' youth to risk death in battle, they had first to invent compelling reasons to fight and then to carefully manage perceptions as battle raged. Out of this need arose Germany's highly deceptive yet seductive culture of war.[24]

The country's subsequent invention of cheering volunteers (fig. 3.3) and a solidly unified populace (fig. 3.4), largely conveyed through press photographs, worked like a narcotic, laced as it was with intense nationalism and the alluring smack of social cohesion. Soon to be described as the "spirit of 1914," the mass high produced by this culture primarily relied on a sense of common purpose and a cohesiveness that had been sorely absent from the country, which had only recently been politically unified.[25] It was specifically against this vision of cohesion that Helmut Herzfeld staged his aggressive antiwar dissent and, of course, his postcards.

By the summer of 1914, the man who would soon rename himself John Heartfield was one of the most promising advertising students in Germany. His high standing in the country's singular and prominent advertising degree program, and his collaboration with its famous director, Ernst Neumann, signaled remarkably rapid progress into the ranks of this new profession. But this richness of training and applied practice ended shortly after Germany declared war on Russia on August 1. Condemned on September 15 to army barracks in the Neukölln district of Berlin, Heartfield now found that his most important collaborators were the close circle of friends he had met the previous year, soon after his arrival in Germany's capital.[26] With these friends, Heartfield learned how to activate an existing artistic persona that was soon characterized by a hair-trigger temper, uncontrollable tantrums, over-

sensitive emotion, and other signs of mental distress. Partly an invention and partly an unfolding of his existing personality, this developing public persona enabled him to escape action on the front and, thereafter, to brilliantly subvert the cultural machinery of war.

When Helmut was conscripted and sent to the Neukölln barracks, he apparently went only grudgingly and with deep bitterness about the disruption of his artistic and professional life. He was young, filled with aspirations, and may have dreaded not just physical death but the demise of his professional life and the distinctive personality from which his most important art now spun. As Wieland explained in 1943, "Almost worse than the idea of death or being crippled was the dread of Prussian barracks drill. For us, the individual, the personality—as it had been even with Goethe, of whom we otherwise weren't too fond—was the most important thing, its development the actual reason for living."[27] But now, having been called up, Heartfield had to turn his attention to the workaday apparatus of the Prussian military, a system of forced induction, barracks training, and will-breaking that plunged its catches into the treacherous trenches of frontline combat.[28]

Here "Prince Jussuf of Thebes" intervened, begging all her close male friends to avoid serving in the conflict.[29] "It was above all Else Lasker-Schüler," Herzfelde later reflected, "shocked by the death of her young friend the poet Georg Trakl on the Austrian front, who daily stood prepared in the Café with writers, painters, and doctors of 'expertise' to see what could be done to help this or that artist conscripted by the military."[30] Heartfield was scheduled to be transferred from his Neukölln barracks to the front in October 1915. "But what could he do against this?" recalled Herzfelde. "Sick he was not, nor did he know how to become ill."[31] The evening before his deployment, Heartfield took his last leave in the city center. There his friends awaited him at their new haunt, the Romanisches Café, not knowing what to do:

> Then Else Lasker-Schüler had an idea: we should all make an exaggerated effort to talk with him gently and considerately as if what he said lacked meaning or coherence. He would respond, as she knew him, in a highly agitated fashion. And then she wanted to convince him that the doctors [he had earlier visited] were mistaken, that John was not "fit for service" but rather belonged, as we could all confirm, in a psychiatric hospital and not on the front.[32]

According to Herzfelde's later recollection, the plot seemed to have worked only too well:

> The next news I received about him came from a Berlin hospital. When I visited him there, I encountered a pale man who spoke in a stammer and, with a rake in the institute's park, tried to scratch leaves into a pile. The striped hospital uniform began to unsettle me distinctly. Had our "psychotherapy" really made him sick?[33]

Even if Herzfelde's colorful recollection is in part apocryphal, its rough outlines mirror the breakdowns that artists such as George Grosz, Max Beckmann, and Otto Schmalhausen experienced or performed in these war years. And as in their cases, Heartfield's betrays an important transformation. At some point in this early stage of the conflict, Heartfield's performance as the highly sensitive artist crossed an important threshold from bohemian positioning to political resistance. The formal markers of this identity, the wild disjunction of mad futurism, would soon take a similar and highly political form in his visual art.

Lasker-Schüler's ruse of feigning incomprehension of Heartfield's speech specifically played on Wieland's existing notion that his brother communicated better through gestures than through words. According to Wieland's account, Heartfield had so fully inhabited this public identity of the language-poor madman that, at this moment, the difference between posture and reality abruptly closed. With the query "Had our 'psychotherapy' really made him sick?" Wieland signals that Heartfield had truly inhabited his new identity as a mentally ill genius. By this reckoning, the former advertiser's actions now became authentic expression of art, presaging a future when anxious gestures and images would become one powerful unit.

It is at this point in Wieland's narrative that he reveals the other reason for Heartfield's residency in a mental hospital: his older brother's attack on his barracks officer the morning following Lasker-Schüler's "therapy."[34] As Heartfield raged at the superior who sardonically dismissed his declaration of insanity, "two noncommissioned officers rushed to his side to restrain him and speak to him just as carefully as we had the previous evening, until the orderlies arrived, who no less carefully led him away." Here came the stunning moment when a heightened sensitivity oriented toward confronting audiences with the escalated extremes of reality became a pair of fists, propelled by the war's despair and thrown at the conflict's administration. Herzfelde later referred to this disposition as "productive rage."[35]

The former infantryman Helmut Herzfeld was now a committed opponent of the war, a violent and raving madman unwilling to allow the military to level his consciously cultivated identity, whether through Prussian barracks training or frontline combat. He had become a wildly antimilitarist and political esthete ready to engage in violent acts against the institutions responsible for war. He was essentially a political performance artist whose risky and very public acts of defiance now unfolded from his earlier persona of the *geisteskrank*—mentally ill—designer. Here was a mode of art making that could potentially reach many more people than carefully constructed postcards and care packages.

After an undefined period of recovery in the mental institution where he had been deposited, Helmut was declared once more "suitable for service." But in lieu of fighting at the front, he served as an assistant postal carrier.[36] He thus became part of the all-important system of postal exchange that disseminated news and linked families with their frontline men. As noted in the previous chapter, Germany's postal operation formed a particularly vulnerable piece of the larger administration of war. With it, the government and military sustained essential personal relationships—and

the resolve—among German soldiers, citizens, and their government. Heartfield now directed his flying fists in a far more calculated action against the war. Assigned to one of Berlin's most sumptuous neighborhoods, as he later reported, "We were supposed to play letter carriers and deliver the [*Berliner*] *Lokal-Anzeiger*, that despised war-mongering paper, to the philistines of the Grunewald district, along with their letters." He found, however, a straightforward way to lighten his duties while also throwing a small wrench into the workings of war. "Do you know what I did?" he later told his interviewer. "I went to the nearest storm drain and threw the letters and everything into the culvert."[37] In this way, he sought to share the disruptions of the war with those he held responsible for sustaining it.

GEORGE GROSZ: FROM PERFORMANCE TO PICTURE

At this point, painter George Grosz entered the lives of Heartfield and Herzfelde. By then, in the autumn of 1915, the conflict had ground into trench warfare and the climate had turned gray. The combatants could claim only the smallest of victories—insignificant pieces of land taken at the cost hundreds of thousands of casualties. With no resolution in sight and with German citizens enduring supply shortages caused by the British naval blockade, Heartfield set out to disrupt the conflict's course in whatever way he could.

His postal sabotage provided one means to this end. But he had yet to find a visual form in which to publicly disseminate his mad opposition to the conflict. According to his and Wieland's recollections, he had begun painting landscapes and still lifes when not performing his military or postal duties.[38] But another regular patron of Berlin's café scene, whom they would soon learn, had in fact already begun composing pictures that would provide them with just the model they craved. George Grosz (then using his given name Georg Groß) had already aroused a great deal of curiosity among café patrons based on his appearance: his face covered in white makeup, his lips painted red, his body clothed in dapper middle-class finery (fig. 3.5). This was a vision Grosz himself relished reproducing in his pictures. After meeting him in 1915, Helmut the trained advertiser abandoned his dabbling in fine art, and both he and his brother dedicated their early careers to publishing Grosz's unusually distressed art.

As Herzfelde later reported, he and the unusual painter first encountered each other on an autumn evening in 1915. Wieland initially took Grosz to be a "curious merchant from Holland," a businessman in Berlin on a mission of shameless war profiteering. Both men had arrived at the home of expressionist painter Ludwig Meidner, who was holding court among the younger members of the bohemian circle in which Herzfelde now counted as a precocious newcomer. These artists and poets shared an opposition to the war, yet, as Herzfelde later explained, they viewed this antagonism as unrelated to their work: "No matter what the war was about, it was not about art or things of the spirit."[39]

Attendees at these gatherings formed a familiar crew, so Wieland was startled "when I saw this stranger in Meidner's studio. New faces were of course not unusual in our circle. Everyone brought people along if he felt like it," but "I was surprised only at the look of the young gentleman."[40] Wieland, ever the careful observer of self-fashioning and a collaborator in his own brother's public identity, was entranced by the vision of this "young gentleman," who, like others in his circle, appeared in one of the many personas he donned to shock or amuse:

Yes, he was quite the gentleman. He looked like a fashion model. His ash-blond hair was faultlessly cut, carefully brushed, and the part was as sharp as the crease in his trousers. . . . His reddish face, his bold profile, and his blue, mistrustful eyes could have been those of a German officer, had not a trace of doubt and shyness made them appear too sensitive. . . . He sat on his chair like the monument to the eternal civilian. "Don't touch me!" his entire attitude commanded. That conservative gray, spotless suit, just a bit too tight on the muscular torso, that silk tie with the small tight knot on the starched, light-blue shirt, those blue-black, almost transparent socks above the almost purposely displayed ankles, the thick-soled oxfords with the heavy punch-hole designs—no doubt these were the things the man loved, and at no price would he exchange them for any sort of uniform.[41]



Fig. 3.5
George Grosz, *Der Liebeskranke* (*The Lovesick*), 1916. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

Reflecting on this vision much later, in 1943, Herzfelde produces a careful catalog of observations that connects the trappings and gestures of the "merchant"'s outward appearance to his possible inward character, precisely as he had done when he introduced his brother to poet Lasker-Schüler at the end of 1913. For Wieland, of course, such distinctive individuality was itself a work of art, and this man seemed exceedingly talented in its creation. But just as important to the young poet was the way in which Grosz linked the performance of this persona to shockingly ironic points about the war's commercialization. It was this daring that specifically attracted Herzfelde and, soon thereafter, Heartfield to their new friend.

As he recalled, Herzfelde had only a moment to take visual inventory of this curious merchant because a heated debate was already under way in Meidner's studio. Like so many of this generation, Heinrich Davringhausen, who would become one of Munich's most prominent *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) painters, had just received "that fatal postcard in his mailbox telling him to report in a sober and scrubbed state at such and such an army office."[42] Of course, a postcard could bind its sender and receivers into either informal acquiescence or cryptic dissent, as discussed in the pervious chapter. But on this occasion, it delivered overt coercion and was carried by hands perhaps more dutiful than those of the temporary postman Heartfield. The arrival of this dour missive quickly provoked an angry discussion of the war and its horrible costs, a habitual theme for the group. Yet their debate was interrupted suddenly by the ostensible merchant Grosz, who begged to disagree. For this alter ego, the war brought vast commercial opportunities and, insofar as he was from the neutral Netherlands, few personal costs.

The merchant then revealed his plan to employ large numbers of severely wounded war cripples to paint patriotic slogans on shrapnel that he would arrange to have collected from the front:

> "My cripples," he continued with near disdain, "will neatly and carefully paint them by hand, with the Iron Cross framed in ivy—oh pardon, in oak leaves [referencing the German national tree]—and with some motto, something like 'Of Great Times' or 'Every Shot Hit the Spot.' For more pious people maybe something like 'Our God Who Planted Iron' or 'God Gave Us and God Saved Us.'"[43]

Best of all, he assured, this odd and triumphalist war kitsch (an example of which later appeared on one of Heartfield's book covers; see plate 8) could be produced at low cost because the war provided an endless supply of shrapnel and, of course, because "cripples are a dime a dozen." Naturally, this speech was a performance.

In Herzfelde's account, Grosz, as the heartless Dutch merchant, capped his cynical scheme with the following riff on war profiteering:

> A couple of traveling salesmen, war wounded of course; it's harder to say no to such people. And I can bet you that before you know it every German writing desk will have such a clean, polished paperweight or ashtray. Millions, I mean it, millions can be made at it. And at the same time, the people get something charming in the house. On the other

hand, the poor cripples are also helped. No, no, gentlemen. You don't always have to emphasize the hideous. Such a war has also cultural value.[44]

In the persona of a profiteer, and clearly to his deep satisfaction, Grosz was lecturing a studio full of artists and poets on the cultural dividends of war, a benefit built from further exploitation of already defeated bodies and scavenged icons of pyrrhic victories. He was also indirectly comparing his listeners' cultural production to his own, suggesting that any art not made in opposition to the war was complicit with it. "It's all the same," Grosz declared nine years later, with Dada and the war in mind. "Whether one sounds a fart or a sonnet by Petrarch, or by Rilke, whether one gilds a boot heal or carves Madonnas, people still get shot, profiteering still continues, people still starve, people still lie. What was the purpose of art? Was it not the pinnacle of fraud?"[45]

Through his masquerade, Grosz sought to shock his small audience with a deadpan delivery of the logic that allowed Germany's war to continue and a passively complicit art to sell. These mementos, assembled from shrapnel by underpaid war cripples, would represent the present moment far more accurately (and popularly) than anything these trained artists could produce.

Slowly, Herzfelde came to realize, not least because of the Dutch merchant's typically Berlin accent, that this character was a fellow artist who wished to provoke Meidner's cohort. Indeed, he soon learned that this pose was one of the many identities Georg Groß had constructed for himself. Already in July 1913 the painter had begun signing his letters "George"; in 1915 he began signing his surname as Grosz, when not assuming identities such as the American Dr. William Thomas King.[46] "George Grosz was rarely George Grosz; he was often pretending to be someone else," Herzfelde and his wife, Gertrud, told historian Beth Irwin Lewis many years later, in a 1967 interview.[47]

Grosz's tendentious performance at Meidner's studio fascinated Herzfelde, and he longed to see how its author's ironic posture translated into images. Weeks later, after laboriously tracking down this (supposed) mystery artist and soliciting a studio visit, Herzfelde saw the thousands of sketches that Grosz compulsively produced but rarely managed to sell, at least according to this later recollection.[48] "Never since," Wieland recollected, "has the work of an artist made such an impression on me. At that time I couldn't explain what made me so enthusiastic about these pictures."[49] Later, when he found the words, Herzfelde described the sketches as both a "revelation" and a sobering "cold shower." Although Grosz supposedly saw his own work as "worthless . . . doodles," Herzfelde—and soon Heartfield—believed that the drawings reflected the larger frayed society from which they sprang, akin to the unsettling mementos Grosz had described in his performance at Meidner's studio. The pictures were

shocking, sobering, tingling, and animated. My brother and I were accustomed to seeing art as the making of beauty perceptible and audible, as that which resides in the interior like the metal of the spirit. Through Grosz we no longer saw the everyday world as

merely insipid, banal, and boring but instead as a drama in which stupidity, brutality, and rot played the lead role.[50]

Images such as *Durchhalten* (*Persevere*, 1916; fig. 3.6) may have administered just this shock. In them, the artist presented the "everyday world" as radically discontinuous, mocking the government's calls for desperate citizens and soldiers alike to "persevere" and hold on to the "spirit of 1914."

In *Durchhalten*, Grosz depicts the torturous wartime nightmare through which people were being enjoined to plod. Here, life, sex, death, and paranoia crush against each other in a startling narrative that the artist maniacally renders with a scratchy application of the pencil or burin. Line competes with line to define confines or contours. For example, the central female figure, a prostitute, at once walks about naked and wears a diaphanous dress made of sharp shards. The rendering of her



Fig. 3.6
George Grosz, *Durchhalten* (*Persevere*), 1916. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.



Fig. 3.7
George Grosz, *Pandemonium*, 1914. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

mouth and eyes, built up through scratches, resembles deep bruises rather than the accentuation of makeup. The man on the left, at whom she leers, scurries forward with a child's coffin under his arm, his face nearly obliterated by similar scratching. The descending man below him is likewise flayed, his head little more than a skull. On the hearse behind, the large coffin partially opens to suggest a toothy grin and winking eye, much like the expression of the wagon's driver. In form and content, Grosz provided a stark contrast between heroic calls for fortitude and the distinctly unheroic conditions of everyday life on the home front. Much like his performance of the cynical Dutch merchant, *Durchhalten* shows that "the lovely phrases had become stale-smelling printer's ink on cheap, brownish paper."[51]

For Grosz, this subject, with its dramatic rendering technique, represented wartime actuality. As he wrote nine years later, "The outbreak of the war made it clear to me that the majority of the masses have no will. At that time they ran with enthusiasm through the streets, without exception driven by the will of the military."[52]

His then-unpublished *Pandemonium* of 1914 (fig. 3.7), piled with screaming figures, collapsing buildings, and crashing streetcars, conveys this nationalist abandon even more frenetically than does the later *Durchhalten*. The thin and hectic line in this earlier picture seems to render stick figures who are as fragile as they are insane.[53] In 1915 and 1916, as the war's costs grew, Grosz became "a genuine misanthrope and a skeptical individualist."[54] "For me," he explained, "my art was sort of a safety valve that let the accumulated hot steam escape. Whenever I had time, I would vent my anger in drawings." This made him the consummate pictorial transcriber of a visceral "disgust and contempt for people."[55] These images were the "sediment of my feelings of hate at that time" and, as it turns out, the perfect visual expression of Heartfield's sentiments as well.[56]

Significantly, Grosz found the best formal vehicle for these feelings not just in futurist artworks, for which he, like Heartfield and Herzfelde, maintained a strong fascination, but in the everyday realm of popular imagery. In order to produce "the most unmediated expression and the shortest interpretation of my strong feelings," he explained after the war, "I copied folkloristic drawings in *pissoires*. Children's drawings also inspired me with their unambiguousness. So I gradually came to this knife-sharp drawing style which allowed me to transmit the absolute misanthropy demanded by my observations."[57] This cutting style was transmitted as an aggressive slash across his image's ground. Salomo Friedländer would ask a few years later, "But does this hand actually hold a pencil? Or is it a knife?"[58]

This style performed in much the way that Grosz's masquerade had at Ludwig Meidner's party. With this aggressive line and the troubling subjects it rendered, the artist produced brutal, upsetting, and distinctly unbeautiful images that he saw as visceral transcriptions of his burning discontent. Herzfelde reported that Grosz's jarring images gave the poet "new eyes" to see the harshness of everyday reality.[59] This sharp, disjunctive style, combined with Heartfield's gestures of resistance, would soon form the compositional formula for the two artists' first photomontages, which adorned their postcards to the front.

According to Herzfelde's various accounts, Heartfield's response to seeing Grosz's drawing, and to meeting the artist himself, was even more dramatic than his own. "Helmut," he explained, "burned all that he had produced up to that time in charcoal, pencil, chalk, ink, tempera, and oil."[60] The "strongly critical relationship we developed toward the art work we now made," Wieland reported, caused Heartfield to reject, even annihilate, his own output. "There was now only one living artist who was allowed to continue working with pencil and quill, and that was our friend George."[61] The young Helmut also found himself seduced by Grosz's bohemian persona. This allure grew so strong by late May of 1918 that Grosz's fiancée, Eva Peter, worried that Heartfield had effectively become Grosz's lackey. In a letter to artist and friend Otto Schmalhausen, she complained that Heartfield "deifies" Grosz, "does literally everything [George] wants, encourages even his most audacious plans and opinions, and flatters his vanity."[62] In the visual arts, in the performance of their personas, and in their deep—if unequal—friendship, the two men would be inseparable for nearly a decade.

DIE NEUE JUGEND AND APPROPRIATION IN PRINT

By the spring of 1916, both Heartfield and Grosz had fashioned the artistic identities and practices that would soon make them famous. Heartfield had destroyed his earlier—if likely small—oeuvre of fine art, save *The Cottage in the Forest*, the painting he had given his aunt Helene years earlier. Now his media of choice were performance and disruption powered by a seemingly mad but prolific rage. Grosz similarly engaged in boisterous performances that drew on an "absolute misanthropy" and a series of satirical identities. But Grosz had also found a way to realize his deep disgust with the world around him in images. Heartfield had not. Instead, after giving up the traditional practice of art he seems to have begun largely after leaving his advertising studies, he dedicated himself to getting Grosz's powerful images into print.

From this point forward, their relationship became one of parallel actions and reciprocal inspiration. Heartfield acted out his discontent with the war and Prussian militarism by assaulting his barrack's commanding officer. As a postal carrier, he dumped the mail of Grunewald's wealthy residents down city drains in order to afflict the comfortable with the war's uneasy disruptions. Grosz, who according to Herzfelde "was impressed by John's method of prompting discontent in Grunewald," devised his own small acts of resistance in response, sending ironic and unsettling care packages to friends and strangers on the war's frontlines.[63] Soon thereafter, the men combined their strategies to send photomontaged postcards to the front.

Yet, as Herzfelde suggests of Grosz's care packages, the postcards would have constituted merely "small acts of resistance." For this reason, among others, the brothers now committed themselves to disseminating Grosz's agitating visions of wartime Germany to a broader audience. But this aspiration faced a headwind: "Until the end of the war, opposition to the conflict could only be indirectly expressed: not mentioned in pictures or in words."[64]

One of the few periodicals that dared to oppose the conflict was *Die Aktion,* where Wieland had earlier published his essay on art and the mentally ill. But, as he noted in retrospect, this art and literary journal "was watched especially carefully by the censors." To bypass their vigilant eyes, the brothers and Grosz would need to find an alternative venue and devise new strategies.

Even as a gymnasium student in Wiesbaden, Herzfelde had entertained the idea of founding a literary and art journal in which he could publish the work of his favorite talents. Although the majority of these authors and artists already had their work regularly published in *Die Aktion* and *Der Sturm*, he apparently wanted to make his own direct impact on Germany's bohemian art world. After arriving in Berlin, however, he found that a lack of money and the outbreak of war rendered this aspiration a distant prospect. As the conflict dragged on and expressions of discontent were increasingly policed, "the demand for a more articulate magazine [than *Die Aktion*] was made increasingly often in our Berlin circle," he later recalled.[65] But military censors, well aware that the war's opponents were continually seeking ways

to disseminate their opinions, seldom granted new publication licenses. Determined to found an avant-garde and subtly antiwar journal despite these constraints, the Herzfelde/Heartfield brothers negotiated with a defunct journal named *Die neue Jugend*, intending to revive its printing under their own direction. Their strategy succeeded.

In July 1916, the first issue edited by Herzfelde and designed by Heartfield appeared (fig. 3.8). [66] A reader perusing the journal encountered a familiar and unthreatening format: medium-size pages with a single poem on each, much in the style of prewar art publications such as *PAN* or *Jugend*. But mixed in among the poems, stories, and commentary were Grosz's knife-sharp drawings. Poet Johannes Becher's ode "To Peace" may have strained the censor's credulity but it nonetheless passed muster.[67] Remarkably, Grosz's *Durchhalten,* which appeared just after Becher's poem, seems also to have passed uncontested. The brothers deemed their censor-dodging efforts a great success and, in the specific case of Grosz's drawing, a substantial realization of their desire to disseminate a shockingly nuance-free vision of wartime Germany. But the ongoing threat of censorship also led Herzfelde to develop strategies of appropriation and quotation that translated the logic of the subversive care packages and photomontaged postcards into a mass format capable of reaching many more hands. This approach, which would come to characterize *Die neue Jugend*'s more subversive work in later issues, and which Berlin's Dada movement characterized as "the first Dadaist printing efforts in Germany," took form quite apart from Grosz's pictures.[68] "Only on the last, primarily finely printed pages of critiques and notices, did an ironic, rebellious tone dominate," explained Herzfelde.[69] It was here that the younger brother devised a strategy in print that soon became fundamental to Heartfield's mass-reproduced images.



NEUE JUGEND

MONATSSCHRIFT

HERAUSGEBER HEINZ BARGER · SCHRIFTLEITER WIELAND HERZFELDE

SIEBTES HEFT JUNI ERSTES JAHR

AN DEN FRIEDEN.

O süßester Traum der streicht wie Sommer lind!
Doch bald mußt du wohl mehr sein als ein Ahnen.
Da blüht er auf wie kleinster Duft von Wind.
Ein Engel durch der Leichen Schlucht sich bahnend.

Dein Tag —: er wölbt! Die Stadt birst vor Geläut.
Der Sonne Fluß erbraust in jeder Straße.
Gemäuer hoch sprießt goldener Strahl-Efeu.
Fanfarenmünder Halleluja blasen.

Das Blutgefild verbaut zu weichem Beet,
Zu Wald und See mit Stern und Wolk darein.
Millionen Toter schwarze Fahne weht
Breit auf vom Grund. Zerpeitschte Lüfte schrein.

Wird sich ein Blitz zum Mord im Abend zücken!?
Nein. Menschen wallen Heilige im Chor.
Auf Promenaden mögt ihr Frauen pflücken.
Ein Bund von Freunden tritt im Platz hervor.

Ihr —: laßt uns gern vom ewigen Frieden reden!
Ja, wissend sehr, daß er Gestalt gewinnt
Noch süßester Traum nur. Unsere Hände jäten
Das Unkraut aus, das jenen Weg bespinnt.
Ertön o Wort, das gleich zur Tat gerinnt!
Das Wort muß wirken! Also laßt uns reden!!

Johannes R. Becher

123

Fig. 3.8
First page (p. 123) of the revived *Neue Jugend*, edited by Wieland Herzfelde and designed by John Heartfield. Vol. 1, no. 7 (June 1916).

In the brothers' first issue, for example, the last page featured an extended quote from the English foreign secretary Sir Edward Grey. Herzfelde, who took editorial credit for the small notices, reprinted these words from the right-wing *Berliner Zeitung,* where they were

doubtlessly bracketed by reassuringly hostile commentary. Here he gave them no such framing but instead tucked them among other small notices to which Grey's words bore no apparent relationship. Lacking contextual integration, the statement surely struck readers as harsh:

> Many Germans believe that their culture is so grand that their will must be forced upon the rest of the world. Because of this, many leading Prussians can only bring themselves to consider one peace, a peace of steel dictated to the other peoples by an over-powerful Germany. They cannot understand, or do not want to understand, that free men and free nations would rather die than accept such terms.[70]

Stripped of the antithetic clothing in which the *Berliner Zeitung* had dressed them, Grey's recycled words seemed a naked indictment of the country's expansionist war aims and therefore the type of pronouncement specifically banned by government and military censors. Essentially, Herzfelde was trying to smuggle dissent into his journal.

This raw swiping of translated words from a conservative Berlin daily may have seemed a foolproof way to disseminate an antiwar critique. But reprinting the words of an enemy government minister without critical comment was a near-illegal act, a point that was made clear to the press in military briefings held regularly throughout the war and codified a year later in the 1917 *Censorship Book for the German Press*. "Articles of the foreign press hostile to Germany," this handbook warned,

> should only be reprinted by the domestic press when, through its form of publication, any misunderstanding by the reader as to the origin of these compositions is avoided. In cases where particularly coarse distortions of the truth must be reported for public consideration or in order to offer an entrée for a particularly effective refutation, it is recommended that critical reflections be added.[71]

Deploying his new strategy of quotation in *Die neue Jugend*, Herzfelde sought to dismantle just this framework of "critical reflections." Nonetheless, he recognized the need to tuck Grey's hostile quote in among the small notices. For the time being the young editor got away with his jest. But keeping one step ahead of watchful eyes, he next developed a strategy that involved appropriating the coarse propaganda of his *own* country's leaders.

This opportunity arose when Berlin's Red Cross office staged an exhibition of portraits glorifying Germany's governmental and military hierarchy. Rather than review the show in customary fashion, as his notices otherwise did, Herzfelde offered a short, ironic introduction and then reprinted selected label texts—featuring quotations by the person depicted—exactly as they appeared beneath the portraits:

> Picture exhibition of the V. G. B. of the Red Cross for the Colonies, Pariserplatz 4. Under these pictures, photographic prints, and reproductions, the outstanding and midlevel

German personalities write their remarks, the most important of which are listed below:

His Imperial Majesty, the German Crown-Prince Wilhelm von Hohenzollern, states, "A thrashing is the best procession." . . . His Majesty, the Duke of Anhalt: "Fear God and obey his commands."—His Excellency, Baron von Plettenberg: "Hurrah!" . . . General of the Infantry, Baron von Hazai: "Halt, endure, retain, stick it out, preserve, restrain, only do not stop." . . . Major Bessermann, Member of the Reichstag: "Through deprivation and death to a German victory. A strong empire from a bloody war."[72]

Stripped of their original context, these words seemed a stinging indictment of the men who spoke them. Herzfelde had thus found a partial alternative to Grosz and Heartfield's strategies of critical appropriation, in this case producing a text-based formula cautiously fit for publication.

There were, however, a number of important differences in Herzfelde's approach. In their private postcards, Grosz and Heartfield had appropriated wartime commodities, advertising, and photographs to "say in images what would have been censored had it been said in words." In this published exhibition "review," Herzfelde inverted that formula by offering words instead of images. In doing so, he was treading upon more heavily policed terrain, at least according to his later reflections. But because these now barbarous-sounding lines were not "enemy" quotations and, correspondingly, did not necessitate "critical reflection," he could rest reasonably assured that his passive implication would escape censure. The result was a strategy of subversive appropriation perfectly suited to the carefully surveyed realm of mass reproduction in which Heartfield, through *Die neue Jugend*, was now working.

That this case involved appropriating captions from portrait images—some of which were photographs—anticipates Heartfield's next step in *Die neue Jugend*. Ever resourceful, he and Grosz would draw on Herzfelde's strategy of quotation and develop a dramatic pictorial and typographic formula for its pages. But this last case of textual appropriation also calls attention to the pictorial conditions of war that pushed Herzfelde to pilfer from the Red Cross's portrait exhibition. For his action suggested that the quotations, once they had been appropriated, said more than the pictures they had originally framed. The significance of this pictorial impoverishment can be judged by looking at the print venue where Herzfelde most likely learned his new strategy.

APPROPRIATION AS "CUTTING OUT THE TIMES"

Die Aktion, the avant-garde journal that *Die neue Jugend* sought to surpass, "was watched especially carefully by the censors," according to Herzfelde. Nonetheless, the journal's editor, Franz Pfemfert, succeeded in developing strategies for bypassing the authorities' restrictive oversight. The most inventive of these involved reprinting excerpted material from other, recently published sources. Regularly appearing



ICH SCHNEIDE DIE ZEIT AUS

Meine Antworten waren, ehe sie mir ihre Fragen stellte. Heute muß mein Schweigen für mich reden — und sie selbst. Die Mappe, in der ich sie mir aufhebe, ist schon arg dickbäuchig geworden; ich will Raum schaffen und beginne, die Zeit auszuschneiden, um ihr Gesicht (und auch ihre Gesichte) über sie selbst hinaus der Welt zu erhalten. Die Scheere quietscht; ich schneide die Zeit aus; sie soll in meiner AKTION sprechen; für sich und für mich.

I

Wir wollen keinen Friedensschluß,
Der weichlich, sanft und gut,
Damit die Welt im Liebeskuß
Für hundert Jahre ruht.
Daß wieder Tangotänze
Das wichtigste auf Erden,
Daß wieder wir die Schwänze
Der fremden Völker werden.

Marie Diers, in dem Gedicht „Frieden —!" im „Volkserzieher", Nr. 7, 1915, Berlin, verantwortlicher Leiter Wilhelm Schwaner.

Wer sein Leben für die Brüder und Schwestern dahingibt, hilft Jesus Christus bei der Erlösung der Welt. *Gabriele Reuter, im „Tag" vom 4. 4. 1915, als „Osterspruch für unsere Feldgrauen".*

Tausend Kreuze stehn und künden,
Deutschland, wie du treu gesät,
Wie mein Volk aus heil'gen Gründen
Ewig, ewig aufersteht!

Walther Nithack-Stahn, Pfarrer an der evangelisch-christlichen Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche zu Berlin, im „Tag" vom 4. 4. 1915, aus dem „Osterspruch für unsere Feldgrauen".

„Ein feste Burg", so dröhnt es vor der Feldschlacht,
So braust es durch die Kirchen, die Theater,
Die Lazarette, über freie Plätze —
Ob Protestant, ob Katholik, ob Jude,
Martinus Luthers mächtiger Choral
Vereint sie alle . . .

Immanuel Heyn, Pfarrer an derselben Kirche, in einem Feuilleton „Luther". „National-Ztg.", Berlin, Nr. 42, 1915.

Illustrierte Unterhaltungs-Beilage

Der Tag

Fig. 3.9
Franz Pfemfert, first publication of the series "Ich schneide die Zeit aus" ("I cut out the times"), *Die Aktion* 30, no. 16/17 (April 17, 1915): 214.

under the heading "Ich schneide die Zeit aus," or "I cut out the times," this material appeared with source attributions but otherwise remained free of editorial commentary (fig. 3.9). Significantly, Pfemfert initiated this feature in the spring of 1915 with a poem that characterized the excerpts as an epoch's revealing itself:

I cut out the times. My answers were there before the times asked the questions. Today my silence must speak for me—and by itself. The portfolio in which I keep the times has already become cruelly potbellied; I want to make room, and begin to release them in order to reveal their face (and also their faces) to the world. The scissors squeak; I cut out the age: it should speak in my AKTION [referencing the journal's title and his snipping]; for itself and for me.[73]

In this extraordinary statement, Pfemfert explains that his silence, at least partially imposed by censors, must speak for itself. Yet it does so in two ways: by allowing the "the times" to "reveal their face . . . to the world," and by clipping out the epoch, a performance accompanied by the scissors' sonorous squeak. This somewhat violent act of appropriation and re-presentation, then, aimed to reflect a violently disordered world back to itself, in neat squares of reprinted text and, in some cases, reproduced pages from newspapers.

What followed Pfemfert's introduction were reprints of four poems representing a cross-section of sentiments about the war, from the rabidly militarist to a more thoughtful reflection on war causalities. He also offered a thumbnail reproduction of an illustrated weekly's first page, where a hand-drawn picture celebrated Prussia's military history. In subsequent issues, up to the war's conclusion, a similar mix of poems, commentary, press imagery, and news stories, largely excerpted from major German newspapers, peppered this feature.

Pfemfert's creative exploit, much like Herzfelde's small notices, mounted an elliptical critique of the war in a time of forced consent. But his equation of the times—his epoch's temporal specificity and development—with scavenged pieces of cultural production—news, poetry, and occasionally pictures—also stunningly short-circuited standard procedures of representation. Poetry by itself could no longer describe its moment adequately, nor could a heavily censored news report, or a glorious photographic portrait of the Kaiser. Only the acts of scavenging, cutting, and re-presenting were adequate to this

task. This last procedure acquired representational veracity through its claim not to represent or interpret, but to reveal. It seemingly allowed the subject to speak for itself without a reporter's or editor's mediation. It embodied the epoch or, perhaps more specifically, provided the most direct and unmediated imprint of the temporal. In these respects, Pfemfert's direct excising of time functioned in a manner normally associated with photography, although it seemed to do so with even greater veracity. It allowed itself to be imprinted by that which it represented. But that stamping involved far more than light. Instead, through the techniques of appropriation and cutting, it embossed the epoch's broader multisensorial tumult.

The Austrian writer Karl Kraus perhaps best summed up this discursive association of quotation with photography when describing a similar montage of appropriated texts that he reprinted in his Viennese journal, *Die Fackel*, albeit just prior to the war:

> My task was to put the times in quotation marks, to have it distort itself in print and placed in parentheses, knowing that what was most unspeakable about it could only be said by itself. Not to proclaim but to repeat the state of the matter, to imitate the appearance of things, to quote *and to take photographs*, and to recognize catchphrase and cliché as the bases of a century [my emphasis].[74]

For Kraus, even in this prewar moment, the act of cutting out the moment by placing it in razor-sharp quotation marks would "imitate the appearance of things," as would the photographs he planned to take as part of this project of excision. Both processes cut out a piece of reality by slamming down the edges of a frame, much as one presses a cookie cutter through soft dough or a camera's viewfinder through reality's continuum. The distortion that resulted and the overlooked revelation that surfaced, particularly in isolation from, or juxtaposition with, other items, seemed to be a product of the moment's own agency, a profound trace drawn by reality itself.

Pfemfert's censor-induced method of causing the age to speak for itself, of having reality snap its own picture, also points to an escalating crisis of pictorial representation, when photography—as suggested in the previous chapter—seemed inadequate to its representational tasks. His aggressive cuts, much like those of Herzfelde in *Die neue Jugend*'s small notices, essentially realized a new, imageless photographic-like process as a more authentic alternative to photography itself or, in the case of Pfemfert, to poetry. What the fawning photographic portrait of a Prussian general may not have revealed on its own arose clearly and subversively from its appropriated caption, reprinted in relative isolation. In subsequent issues of *Die neue Jugend*, Heartfield, Grosz, and a new colleague would transform this textual montage into visually boisterous modes of typography and graphic design that seemed to proffer a shocking image of its time.

SOEBEN ERSCHIENEN! JUST OUT!

Although *Die neue Jugend*'s indirect messages enabled it to become the "voice against the war" that its editors wanted it to be, it simply could not "persevere" under the regime's increasing sensitivity. In April 1917 the censors grew wise to its implied antiwar message and banned the journal without explanation.[75] The publication had already sustained a blow when Wieland Herzfelde and George Grosz were called to a second tour of duty after long respites in Berlin. Herzfelde left in early November 1916, and Grosz left sometime just after January 4, 1917 (although he soon returned). Their absences effectively left Heartfield as the periodical's sole administrator. Remarkably, despite these setbacks, *Die neue Jugend* did not stop printing; a February/March double issue appeared shortly before the ban, and two weekly editions subsequently hit kiosks without a license. This feat was made possible by the assistance of a rambunctious new collaborator.

When the need to find fresh help from within Berlin's bohemia had become critical, Heinz Barger, the former director of *Die neue Jugend*, from whom Wieland had taken control in 1916, tried to reestablish his direction over the periodical and infuse his prowar posture. The artists and poets still clustered around the journal found this interference intolerable and wrote Herzfelde that *Die neue Jugend*'s fate lay in the balance. Heartfield and his remaining stable of contributors, however, managed to recruit an energetic new editor who not only helped Heartfield keep the journal alive but who promoted a significant transformation in its appearance. This new collaborator was the political activist and writer Franz Jung.

Jung was perfectly suited to the task. He had cut his teeth on a similar venture before the war, contributing to, and likely coediting, *Die Revolution*, a short-lived journal based in Munich. Although this 1913 serial and its primary shapers, the poet Hans Leybold and future Zürich Dadaist Hugo Ball, saw revolution in terms of aesthetic rupture, Jung quickly came to view his charge in political terms as well. This difference in perception arose from his maturation within the circles around anarchist writers Erich Mühsam and Gustav Landauer, both of whom later filled key positions in Bavaria's postwar republic, a "soviet" toppled in 1919 not long after it came to power. The prewar environment these men cultivated prized political action in conjunction with the written word and promoted art as an essential way to cultivate class consciousness among the poor and the working class. Their visions of an aggressive and politically activist art motivated Jung's contributions to *Die Revolution* in 1913 and encouraged his move, later that year, to the more vibrant art center of Berlin. There he cofounded and edited his own anarchist journal, *Die freie Strasse* (*The Open Street*), from 1915 to 1918, a remarkable feat in wartime. When he joined *Die neue Jugend* as well, in late December 1916 or January 1917, he brought with him a far more aggressive editorial posture than that of his predecessors. This suffusion of energy reanimated the journal with new content and, just as importantly, a new look.

Another influence that profoundly shaped Jung and that made his persona extremely attractive to Heartfield was his embrace of an unorthodox psychoanalytic theory that encouraged appreciation of the unconscious and mental illness. This thesis, adopted from a renegade student of Sigmund Freud named Otto Gross, held that the liberation of libidinal sexuality from the repressive apparatus of socialization could unleash a cultural and political revolution powered by unrestrained expressions of deep desires. The aspect of this theory that particularly attracted Jung and, in turn, Heartfield was Gross's understanding of neurosis as a latent form of cultural subversion. Indeed, Jung feverishly performed the role of the unrestrained neurotic. As George Grosz recalled in his autobiography, Jung was a wild bohemian whose behavior recalled fictions of the American gunslinger. "He drank heavily" and "was always surrounded by a few loyally attached vassals. When drunk, he would shoot his revolver at us like a cowboy in a Western."[76]

Jung's acting out of his conviction and his embrace of mental instability was attractive not only to Heartfield, for whom it became a narcotic, but to George Grosz when he returned in April from a military mental hospital, after having suffered a nervous breakdown near the front. Like Freud before the turn of the century, both Otto Gross and Franz Jung indulged in cocaine as "therapy," and Heartfield, dumbstruck by Jung's personality and their joint work, took to the drug as well. According to Zürich Dadaist Richard Huelsenbeck, Heartfield ingested cocaine with abandon, becoming, at least in one case, something like a violent animal, hypersensitive to stimulation and rabid with rampaging outbursts. The incident took place some time near the war's end, after a long night of group drinking and cocaine snorting, when "Heartfield became so unruly that we had to forcefully restrain him." The group then bundled the monteur back to Wieland's attic apartment, where he "was bound to a chair. We then provoked him with words and blows, just as one taunts an animal in the zoo."[77] With Jung as a model, Heartfield played out his role as the madly sensitive artist, ready to transform the blows leveled by his surrounding environment into a wild production.[78] But with Jung's help, too, he found a way to give this animated intensity a visual form—in, of all things, typography, an expressive medium that could match and even enhance Grosz's existing drawing and subsequent painting.

By May of 1917, *Die neue Jugend* had been salvaged by this cocaine-fueled collaboration. Blithely confident in their goal, Heartfield and Jung received a concession for an entirely new press, something scarcely ever awarded in the war years. By doing so, they hoped to escape the interference of Heinz Barger and to establish a home for many literary and visual art ventures to come. Sometime in January or February of 1917, Heartfield had personally presented their request to the chief censor of the region, General von Kessel in Potsdam, explaining that the name of his proposed publishing house, Malik (supposedly Turkish for king), referred to an Ottoman prince whose popularization in a new novel by Lasker-Schüler would boost the German fighting spirit. Ottoman Turkey was then allied with Germany in the war, and Lasker-Schüler's piece, *Der Malik*, was to be published in serial form by the new press's primary organ, *Die neue Jugend*. The journal's February/March

issue already bore the Malik-Verlag imprint and, as promised, the continuation of Lasker-Schüler's novel. A letter dated May 14, 1917, from Jung to Grosz confirms that Heartfield had on that spring day surmounted the last administrative hurdles of this near miracle. The press that had already begun publishing was now officially registered as "Der Malik-Verlag Hellmut Herzfeld."[79]

In May and June Jung, Heartfield, and Grosz published two unlicensed "weekly" editions of the still-banned monthly *Die neue Jugend* (fig. 3.10). "At once," Grosz later recalled, the journal "assumed a new face: it became aggressive."[80] This assertive vision was the result of Heartfield's innovations.

The publication was indeed stunning: it was a large-format flier, 52 centimeters wide and 64 centimeters high, which made quite a statement, Jung recalled, "in a time of paper restrictions and a ban on new publications."[81] Both issues experimented with blaring headlines, jumbled type sizes, and radically varied registers of text. But especially in the June release, Heartfield performed the graphic and typographic equivalent of one of his cocaine-induced tirades. The text and graphics appeared in three colors and were distributed in a seemingly random fashion over the pages. The type size also varied wildly, from very small to demonstratively large within each page, and even within a single item. Such typographic inventiveness called attention to features such as "One Must Be a Rubberman," "The Sect of 1917," or "Can You Ride a Bicycle?" but failed to give meaning to these stories, whose apparent senselessness, incongruity, or lack of unifying context, might puzzle the reader. With Heartfied's design and typography as a framework, this issue sought to mirror its moment, conveying the new notion of "the times speaking for themselves" as an optical and textual tour de force.

A number of factors influenced Heartfield's technique, as well as Jung's and Grosz's editorial choices. The three men had brazenly decided not to submit their work to the censors, perhaps concerned that doing so would put their new publishing concession at risk. They nonetheless determined to sell their new *Neue Jugend* issue from kiosks and through the mail. Consequently, they had to make their appeal primarily through the periodical's form, which would have to stimulate the curiosity of passersby without presenting straightforwardly countermilitarist assertions, or keywords such as "peace," that might provoke the police. As Jung wrote:

> There was nothing of freedom in its contents—the only thing that the police were on the hunt for. Nonetheless, they all had to be purchased within an hour. It was just this amount of time the police needed to get a warrant for seizure in their hands.[82]

Such were the conditions under which the two illicit "supplements" of *Die neue Jugend* were printed. Yet, despite these restrictions, the editors wanted their antiwar commentary on the wartime moment to be somehow discernible. Here is where the age had to reveal itself through its own jumbled form.

Perhaps as a further device to avoid instant censorship, the editors billed their June issue, in small letters (twice) at the top of page one and larger type at the

IM JUNI 1917

NEUE JUGEND

PREIS 20 PF.

PROSPEKT
zur Kleinen Grosz Mappe.
Der Malik-Verlag, Berlin-Südende

Prospekt zur Kleinen Grosz Mappe. — 34, Steglitzer Strasse, Südende.

CHRONIK Friedrich Adler ist zum Tode verurteilt, Stockholm-Getöne gegen internationale Teuerung - das Leben weiterhin billiger, Lebensmittel bleiben in Cornerstimmung. Nach Reuter verhungern in Ovamboland die Ovambos, keine Kaffern - in den European Dominions niemand! Verhungert doch - Steigerung!! Spinoza ist eingestampft für Bedarf diplomatischer Sendschreiben - Liberia, Pseudoliberia - Molière verrieselt in Sternheim (Zukunft vom 26. 5. 1917), Umfassungsmanöver gegen Wallner in Wien, Durst! - das Aktionsbuch ist erschienen. Frühlingswende fiebert Sexualität, Heufieber. Liebeloh la l'au! Sich hinzu-schmeissen! Lichtmord!! — unsere Seelen sind so wund. **Amokläufer** . . . . . Die Messer raus!!!

Man muß Kautschukmann sein!

Ja, Kautschukmann sein — eventuell den Kopf zwischen die Beine stecken oder durchs Faß springen — und spiralig in die Luft schnellen! sieh, ein Paragraph rempelt Dich an,
eine Affiche,
ein Flohzirkus . . .
. . . . . .
(sämtliche Flöhe liegen an Schlingen — desertieren ausgeschlossen — Springen von Flöhen auf Kommando, Parademarsch der Flöhe . . . . . .)



EIN „MARSIAS" INTERESSENT

Immerhin wichtig ist, das Gleichgewichtzu behalten!
Wo vordem die gotische Kirche,
messelt sich heute das Warenhaus hoch — !
— Die Fahrstühle sausen . . . Eisenbahnunglücks, Explosionskatastrophen . . . .
— quer durchrast der Balkanzug Mitteleuropa,
doch gibts auch Baumblüte und Edelmarmeladenrationierung . . . .
Wie gesagt, Kautschukmann sein
beweglich in allen Knochen
nicht blos im Dichter-Sessel dösen
oder vor der Staffelei schön getönte Bildchen pinseln.

Den Bequemen gilts zu stören
beim Verdauungsschläfchen
ihm den pazifistischen Popo zu kitzeln,
rumort! explodiert! zerplatzt! — oder hängt euch ans Fensterkreuz . . . . . .
Laßt euren Kadaver in die Branntweingasse baumeln!
Ja! Wieder elastisch werden, nach allen Seiten höchst federnd — sich verbiegen — anboxen! Kinn- oder Herzgrubenhieb!

Ladies and gentlemen!!
Jeder hat Zutritt!

Nur nähertreten!! . . . nur nähertreten!! . . .
Schon beulen sie den Weihrauchkessel ein.
Nervös rutscht das weiche Gesäß hin und her!
. . . . . .
Ja! Wenn nicht sämtliche Flöhe an Schlingen lägen! . . . . . .

Dieses Blatt ist der

PROSPEKT
ZUR
KLEINEN
GROSZ-MAPPE

Die Sekte 1917

Die Sekte Neunzehn Siebzehn wächst aus dem Intellekt der umstehenden Zuhörer empor und zwingt ihre Mitglieder gegen den Block der Überzeugten. Die ohnmächtige Wut unserer Leser verpflichtet, einen bereits in Schwingung umgesetzten Glauben wieder zu fixieren, um mit den Gläubigen von neuem dagegen loszugehen. Die Leute wollen halt nichts alleine tun.

Sekten. Mehr Sekten. Noch mehr Sekten.

Das Wunder der Christian Science ist über unseren kürzlich veranstalteten Werbe Abend gerauscht und schüttet Glück aus über diejenigen, die uns lieben, um uns hinterrücks zu erdolchen.

Darum muss Einer seine Stimme erheben: Nicht mehr glauben, überhaupt nicht glauben. Sich selbst. (Sich und selbst) Beten.

Wenngleich jeder schuldig ist an der Unfähigkeit der andern, Feind zu sein, sondern schlotternder Neidhammel, soll keiner an dieser Schuld sich selbst beruhigt genug sein lassen. Nicht das Peinliche dieser Schuld schmatzend zu fressen, soll es ankommen, sondern Genuss auch noch auszukotzen — und wiederum zu fressen und wiederum!

Es ist in jeder Sekunde, die ein hundertmalverfluchtes Leben schenkt (unsägliche Wonne durstend das galizische Petroleumgebiet zu durchfahren, die Gestänge der Bohrtürme verrusst!) so unendlich vieles zu tun.

Betet mit dem Schädel gegen die Wand!!

Wir — aha! — wir treten gegen die Menschen nicht auf. Wir treten geduldig noch mit den Menschen auf. Die Sekte Neunzehn Siebzehn schlägt gegeneinander, Sturmflut aus unseren Gebeten, die aus der Ohnmacht der Gläubigen emporgewachsen sind. Unsere Mitglieder verrecken, weil die Sekte sie nicht mehr locker lässt. Betet aus



unseren Gebeten zu diesem Ende. Damit ihr endlich in die Schlinge kommt. Es ist ein so ungleiches Spiel mit diesen Sanften, Zappelnden. Der Magen der **Neunzehn Siebzehn** will das alles nicht mehr verdauen, immer wieder dasselbe, die Ohnmacht der Gläubigen, der Block der Ueberzeugten, das Einfangen, Verarbeiten, Auskotzen, Fressen, das Ich triumphierend über Puntas Arenas, Michigan See, Sachalin bis Sorau. Dort wurde der Dichter Heinrich Steinhausen geboren, steht in der Zeitung.

Halt dich, Junge.

Die Frist ist um. Her die neue Ladung. Sektierer, los! Wieviel zappeln schon wieder?

Die Arbeit Arbeit Arbeit Arbeit: Triumph der Christian Science.

Das Wunder der Sekte Neunzehn Siebzehn.

1917.

SCHREIT!!

Kannst du radfahren ?

Zu den reinsten unverbildeten Erklärungen und Dokumenten unseres Lebens gehören jene Bilder auf den Rückfronten der Häuser, diese Erlasse des Kaufmanns (des wahren Herrn dieser Zeit) — von unerbörter Sachlichkeit vorgetragen, gigantisch eingeätzt wie auf alten Pyramiden, pressen sie das psychologische und formale Erleben des in knallendem Stadtbahnzug Dahinrollenden. Fabelhaft bunt und klar, wie nie ein Tafelbildchen, — von kosmischer Komik, brutal, materiell, bleichsüchtig, verwaschen — drohend und mahnend gleich Ragtimesteppfanzmelodie immer wieder sich ins Gehirn bohrend —

Das gröhlt in einem fort!

Zwingt uns zum prallenden Marineblau, zu Grellrots (ganze Straßen Buchstaben), Varietégrün, Spezialitätengelb, Wollwarengrau, und fatalndes Rosa —

Moziatonen tauchen auf . . . . . .

Champagner-Flasche — der Korken knallt davon, ho! ho! Sekt Schloss Vaux.

Ich, Dannemann-Zigarre schief im Maul, Zeitung — vor mir knarren die Knattermotore — hart überholt nach Backbord der rote Autobus!

Ho! ho! schon wieder brüllen die Häuserwände:

Regie-Zigaretten, *Satrap*, **Palast-Hotel**, Teppich-Thomas, **bade zu Hause, Steiners Paradiesbett** . . . . . ho! . . . . . *Sarg's Kalodont* . . . . . *Passage-Café* . . . . . **AEG** . . . . . Ceresit.

z. B., vom Training kommend, am Punching Ball . . . . Den Joe hiebst Du nieder.

z. B., Du segelnst fabelhaft in die Chausseen, eben noch flog Dir der Fußball an die klemmerlose Nase, Du hingst oben im Aeroplan unter der Bergsonne — zwischen den Stämmen knallte Deine Winchesterbüchse (Gott ließ ja Eisen wachsen, bravo)

Abends in den Asphaltbrüchen, in Geldsack-Hills, zwischen Porter-Bierplakaten, oder an der Bar bei Kantorowicz, in Zoquellen oder pikfein mit steilem Hemd aalglatt bei Adlon, strömendes **Pils Coctalis Ersatz** und Agoston, **Apollotheater** und Kinohäuser . . . . . und dem Treiben der beiden Herzfelder! . . . . . .

Sag mal? — . . . . . **graults Dir** da **nicht** in den Kunstsalons? in den Ölgemäldegalerien . . . . . ?
in den literarische Soiréen . . . . . ?

Lieber Leser! Ein guter Fußballspieler enthält immerhin eine ganze Menge Wert — obwohl er nicht dichtet, malt und Töne setzt!

Bleibt die Frage?

Kennst Du Schiller und Goethe — ? — ja!

Aber kannst Du radfahren?



Weitere Marxpax-Interessenten wollen sich noch melden!

bottom left, as a prospectus for Grosz's most recent portfolio of drawings. Though not a single drawing from the portfolio could be found on its four pages, the issue essentially became an elaborate advertisement. A more expansive announcement on the last page amounted to an explosion of typeface and printer's clichés (plate 2). "*Soeben Erschienen!*" (Just out!) appears in three colors above a skull and crossbones, while publisher's graphics and words such as "execution," "death," and "the village school teacher" circle in confusion. These words were actually the titles of the lithographs included in the portfolio.

Yet here Heartfield coupled the labels with further antiquated printer's clichés. A cranking phonograph belts the German word *Mord* (murder), while the central skull, blowing a small green trumpet, has to its left the designation *Hinrichtung,* or "execution." *Am Kanal*—"on the canal"—accompanies a ship with raised sails. Meanwhile, a multicolored peppering of crosses, skulls and crossbones, and a coffin convey the theme of death rehearsed in Grosz's portfolio images. Heartfield here translated Grosz's knife-hard style into a typographic blade that similarly cut through its tortured age. The advertisement represented yet another reworking of a given medium through montage, a near-violent effort to force newspaper and advertising to reveal the torment they were generally tasked with concealing.

The shock of this visual confusion reportedly had the desired consequence. As Jung noted, "People took it only on the basis of the impact made by its presentation," and the issue quickly sold out.[83] Grosz, too, later ascribed the issue's success and larger meaning to this visual effect:

> This all added up to a message that frightened the uninitiated and went far beyond anything most people expected. It reflected the spirit of the time, of a world in the process of being dismembered.[84]

"The very form of the flier," historian of typography Jan Tschichold affirmed in 1928, "mirrored the entire chaos of the age."[85]

Die neue Jugend had managed to cast this reflection, as Jung and Tschichold suggest, by transforming presentation into bawdy visual performance. Typeface and clichés jumped at potential purchasers of this "prospectus," while texts such as "Madmen . . . Out with your knives!!!" (under the journal's title) equated the issue's visual disorder with rampaging insanity. The staging of mental illness now had a shocking, mass-produced visual face, fashioned not by Grosz's drawings but Heartfield's typography.

JOHN HEARTFIELD, THE PERFORMANCE

Perhaps not coincidentally, near this moment in June 1917, Helmut Herzfeld informally Anglicized his name as a brazen protest against the war. The first extant mention of this new moniker is in a letter from Else Lasker-Schüler to Franz Jung

Fig. 3.10
John Heartfield, George Grosz, and Franz Jung, cover page, *Die neue Jugend*, June 1917. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

dated "middle of August 1917." There she refers to her young artist friend as "J. H."[86] Seemingly inspired by Jung's aggressiveness and following on the model established by Herzfelde and George Grosz, Heartfield now began the mature phase of his lifelong performance.

Heartfield's name change constituted an act of resistance against the waves of nationalist jingoism that had washed over his countrymen since the declaration of war in August 1914.[87] For example, Ernst Lissauer, one of the poets who had collaborated with the "hurrah patriotism" that Lasker-Schüler's circle so earnestly despised, penned an anti-British song with the catchy refrain "We love in unity, we hate in unity, we all have but one enemy: England!" The sentiment took hold of the popular imagination and even led to a transformation of public salutation. Whereas before the war, people in Germany generally greeted each other with the familiar "guten Tag," now they often bellowed, "God punish England!" The expected response was "He'll do so." This everyday exchange saw Lissauer's lyric "we hate in unity" realized in the country's streets, stores, and parks. In expecting or even demanding a suitable response to this aggressive greeting, the average patriot could coerce those he greeted to participate in the general discourse of martial unity.

With the last issue of *Die neue Jugend* and Heartfield's dramatic—but still informal—name change, we can see that the most accurate reflection of the moment came in the compositional-cum-performative force that we today recognize in the broadest sense as montage, a process of appropriation, juxtaposition, and transformation normally made at the level of spectacle. Exactly which medium was subjected to this assault seemed unimportant. Language, the written word, visual art, and photography had all failed to convey the moment's harsh reality and instead had been used to distract Germany's civilians with sweet and boastful visions. All of these media now demanded reinvention. The most important aspect of montage's assault on each was the impact of the slicing itself, the snipping and jumbling that conveyed what the moment's retrieved and transformed detritus obscured.

In this regard, Heartfield and Grosz's postcards seem to have showcased photography's failure, demonstrating that the medium could approximate reality only if torn from its initial context and subjected to the brutal physical conditions of the moment. The postcards had thus marked the advent of montage as a *formal* strategy that was not yet specific to one medium. Heartfield's typographic inventions then realized this operation as a public gesture that seemingly reflected the moment's chaos as a harried visual and syntactical jumble.

This situation would soon change, but not in a manner we might anticipate. In 1918 Heartfield decided that photography had become so complicit in ameliorative misrepresentation that even montage could no longer salvage it, at least in the context of Wilhelmine censorship. Thus, he turned to animated film, where the age's extreme violence could finally find its most shocking realization in exploding moving images.

4

“A POLITICAL STRUWWELPETER?”

John Heartfield’s Early Film Animation and the Wartime Crisis of Photographic Representation

1917–1918

ON APRIL 13, 1918, BERLIN'S TÄGLICHE RUNDSCHAU NEWSPAPER OFFERED A surprising and potentially shocking report. During the previous evening, the city's finely appointed Secession gallery had

> experienced a barrage of gunfire [*Trommelfeuer*], a military assault. A number of people who were suddenly overcome by nervous shock spun themselves into the spectacle as if suffering from Saint Vitus's dance. Meanwhile, a child's noisemaker clattered. Lovis Corinth's figures, which hung on the walls, looked ready to flee. They feared the impact of chair legs. Florian Geyer held his sword in defensive readiness.[1]

Local readers of this story might have been forgiven a moment of panic. The Berlin Secession lay on the sumptuous Kurfürstendamm, firmly in the city's western heart and far from the fighting in France, where mechanized slaughter continued unabated. Despite this safe distance, had Germany's capital actually suffered an Allied assault? In this city where, as Richard Huelsenbeck noted, "fear was in everyone's bones," where "everybody had the feeling that the big deal launched by [General Paul von] Hindenburg & Co. was going to turn out very badly," this story must have caused deep disquiet.

The *Tägliche Rundschau*, however, was not reporting a turn in the conflict. Rather, it was reviewing the first "lecture evening" to be fully billed as a Berlin Dada event. And although participants may have mercifully declined to bombard their audience with actual *Trommelfeuer*, their aggressive poetry and manifestos struck with a comparable impact. Richard Huelsenbeck, a cofounder of Dada's original

Zurich iteration, began the evening by shouting his manifesto for a new art driven by the moment's authentic torment and violence.[2] The poet Else Hadwiger then read translated excerpts of *Zang Tumb Tuuum*, the onomatopoeic war poem by F. T. Marinetti, founder of Italy's futurist movement. As Hadwiger randomly pulled selections of the poem from a bag and incanted their machine-gun transcriptions, Huelsenbeck banged a toy drum and blew a child's horn.[3] Between blows and stanzas, he yelled at the audience "To the front with you!" "Shut up!" and "Quiet!" This Italian-cum-Prussian military din put the hall in such an "explosive mood . . . that a great commotion broke out when a lady's pince-nez fell to the floor."[4] Berlin's new Dada movement had apparently found a way to push its audience to the breaking point with truly distressing reflections of war.

This was precisely the sort of angst that John Heartfield sought to provoke through yet another medium he had turned to in the same spring months: film. His cinematic provocations, which are rarely discussed in relation to his larger career, would seek to be just as comprehensively multisensorial as Berlin Dada's first performance. And that evening's assault on the senses was indeed intense. Back at the Secession gallery, for example, George Grosz had followed Huelsenbeck and Hadwiger's wild orchestration of movement and noise with his jazz-inspired dance *Sincopations* and his violent lyrical poetry. Though we do not know what poems he read that night, one of his then-new creations ran as follows:

In the evenings, mantled sewers
An overpainted putrefaction
Perfumed stench
Groß [*sic*] sniffs the air/Parbleu! Here it smells of roasted children.[5]

With this reading would have come the suggestion of an olfactory assault to parallel the tactile and aural attacks of the evening. By the time the poet and artist Raoul Hausmann began reading his "New Materials in Painting" manifesto, the audience had become so agitated that the Secession management turned out the lights, hoping to end the evening and its unwelcome ruckus. The manager of this fin de siècle art space had grown concerned for the safety of the paintings that Hausmann was indirectly cursing, specifically the Corinth canvases that hung around the audiences in a grand retrospective exhibition. Among these pictures was the sword-wielding warrior Florian Geyer (1906), which the *Tägliche Rundschau* noted was now in danger of being pummeled with chair legs thrown by distraught members of the audience.[6] In a classic Dada subversion, traditional visual art had become a punching bag, while the punch itself, an act of visceral violence, had become the new aesthetic "material." "Nevertheless," wrote the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* of the program's sudden end, "the evening had achieved its goal: to cause a row."[7] As the Renaissance-era rebel Geyer fell into darkness, the audience seemingly experienced the manic grimacing and uncontrolled bodily jerking of Saint Vitus's dance, a neurologically based ailment caused by rheumatic fever, a disease then plaguing undernourished Berliners.

Already in its first evening, Berlin Dada had realized its call for an art "visibly shattered by the explosions of last week" and whose "content presents the thousandfold problems of the day" in the most bracing way possible.[8] The shock delivered by this art-turned-shrapnel ripped away the carefully composed decorum of war-weary Berlin and revealed a madness convulsing underneath. If Dada had arisen out of heated opposition to the war, the Berlin movement wished to share this enmity by incorporating the palpable but repressed horror of the conflict into its multisensory art. This dramatic orchestration of aggression, claimed one reviewer, clearly modeled itself on the *Sensationsfilm*, an early form of cinema that offered stimulating, carnivalesque performances and sensational optical tricks.[9]

But could a Dadaist participate in unnerving performance pieces by night and direct prowar propaganda films for his government by day? The idea may seem preposterous given the movement's antiwar foundation and its subversive agitation against the conflict. Yet three of the Berlin movement's most productive members, John Heartfield, Wieland Herzfelde, and George Grosz, all moonlighted in this way throughout 1918, the first year of "Club Dada." In fact, the unfolding of these two seemingly contradictory engagements ran in remarkable parallel.

In December 1917 the News Department of the German Foreign Office hired Heartfield to direct propaganda films.[10] He, in turn, hired Grosz as a creative assistant and, by midsummer 1918, Herzfelde as well.[11] Not long before then, on January 22, Richard Huelsenbeck had delivered his "First Dada Speech in Germany" at an expressionist-oriented author's evening in Berlin. Three months later, he and Grosz participated in Berlin Dada's inaugural lecture evening, described above. Heartfield, then nearly inseparable from the painter, probably assisted with the event's preparation and staging.[12] The tight overlap of these commitments suggests that the men's propaganda and Dada projects were actually conjoined.

An additional set of temporal coincidences also supports this possibility. On the very day of the Secession gallery performance, April 12, Heartfield was completing a progress report on his film-propaganda work, a dispatch that his overseer received three days later.[13] Similarly, three months before Grosz "played . . . football with the listeners' skulls" at the same Dada event, word was sent that he should receive the army's full assistance with his film work.[14] The request for this authority, which the military quickly granted, reads as follows:

> Herr George Grosz, a fine arts painter from the South End [of Berlin] is engaged by us [the News Department of the Foreign Office] to put together several patriotic films that should be shown in all of the military's battlefield cinemas. I request in the interest of the Fatherland that you readily support his work toward the completion of these films.[15]

If Grosz used the Wilhelmine military's help to make "patriotic films" for "the interest of the fatherland," than his movies might have occupied an ideological terrain far removed from Dada's own. Yet the fact that this generous authorization

carries Georg Groß's Anglicized first name, "George," and his unusual new surname, "Grosz," reveals a distinct lack of vetting. In fact, it suggests that this film project was, from the start, leavened with the potent yeast of Dada subversion.

Just as potentially significant is the stunning violence embedded in the two men's film projects. In their "patriotic" productions, Heartfield and Grosz likely sought to expose mass audiences of civilians and soldiers to the violent extremes of Europe's conflict and thereby to subvert their employer's propaganda goals. Could it be, therefore, that a lack of vetting allowed both projects to engage the strategies of a *Sensationsfilm*? Would their movies, in other words, assault audiences with the same sensory flourishes and nerve-wracking provocations that their Dada performances dispensed?

This chapter proposes just such a possibility by carefully reconstructing Heartfield's and Grosz's wartime films, none of which were ever released and all of which are probably lost. My goal is to trace the aggressive appeals their films made to viewers' sensorial faculties, which had been traumatized by the conflict and then numbed by the war machine's ameliorative propaganda. In addition to exploring these films' strongly somatic appeal, I focus on perhaps their most stunning characteristic: that they were largely animated.

Why would these central figures in the history of photomontage, particularly Heartfield, abnegate the combined photographic and montage potential of live-action film in favor of the no less radical but thoroughly invented world of animation? The answer, I suggest, is that by the war's midpoint, animation provided what photography and live-action film could no longer deliver: a genuine sense of both the war's excitement and its horrors. Not only had these two media modes failed to represent the war accurately, but their fundamental integrity had been deeply impugned by their use as optical sedatives in wartime reportage. The mass deployment of these anodyne images meant that average viewers on the home front lived in an environment of officially planned sensorial impoverishment, sheltered and distracted even as they saw friends and relatives returning shell-shocked to their starving families. Only other media modes that had generally been left unutilized—film animation and a wildly energetic puppet play—could restore an authentic sense of the war's trauma, as Heartfield subtly suggested at the time.

This excitement of embodied perception was also the goal of Berlin Dada's early performances, events to which audience members reacted with signs of neurological disorder, threatening to tear the legs off their chairs to start a riot. These same strategies would, in turn, animate the group's subsequent photomontage and, later still, they would direct Heartfield's mature work, particularly the montages in which he sought to impress viewers with the ideological and physical breakdown of Weimar-era Germany. In all of these cases, the elements of animation's appeal—its optically signified sound, movement, and smell—operated as a fundamental point of origin.

In order to make this case, the chapter first visits the imperial German Foreign Office to explore the propaganda-film program in which Heartfield played a crucial role. It then surveys Heartfield's correspondence, in which one finds detailed plans

for his "fantastic, grotesque films." These, along with other documents, will be needed to reconstruct the realized works. Next it explores the cinematic context in which these films would have been unleashed. A quick comparison with the men's Dada performances and with Heartfield's subsequent photomontage then underlines how consistently their works appealed to an already traumatized and raw sensorium. The chapter concludes by reconsidering Walter Benjamin's proposal that "Dadaism attempted to produce with the means of painting (or literature) the effects which the public today seeks in film."[16] I suggest that Benjamin accidentally inverted this relationship and thus overlooked a key relationship between early cinema and the historical avant-garde. Although film and photography presented formally and perceptually radical tools for pioneering artists, the flickering, violent, and seemingly sonorous experience of animation may have offered something even more revolutionary. One can, in fact, discern this alternate order in Benjamin's own evocation of Mickey Mouse as a figure "of collective dream."[17] By reconfiguring this relationship as charted by Benjamin, I wish to highlight the historical conditions that led to Heartfield's postwar photomontage.

DADA, THE PATRON, AND THE ANIMATOR

Born in 1916 in a low-rent cabaret in Zurich, Dada largely drew from a community of exiles who had fled to neutral Switzerland to escape the war. Given this commonality, their movement was, not surprisingly, just as hostile to the conflict as the soon to be renamed John Heartfield had become. Yet because the participants were mostly artists and writers reared in the realm of high culture, their disillusionment initially focused on fine art and its status within a Western world sullied by the Great War's senseless slaughter. But as the movement gained momentum, its members turned their attention to the popular culture that Heartfield knew so well. They had made this move in order to reinvigorate fine art, to make it fresher, more accessible, more fully expressive of "this unutterable age," as Hugo Ball, one of Dada's founding members, explained.[18]

One of the movement's greatest contributions is that its members combined this discovery of popular culture with a use of the avant-garde techniques that had developed in cubism, futurism, and expressionism. Particularly in the case of cubism, these procedures had been incubated among art cognoscenti who had little obvious interest in the everyday world with which their work might interact. This blending of mass culture critique and broadly applied avant-garde technique in Zurich thus paralleled Heartfield's efforts in Berlin.

For his part, Ball turned his attention to the wartime press apparatus that had already led Heartfield to question photography's usefulness. The famous poet then began rethinking the veracity of contemporary signification in text. Using futurist-inspired formal techniques and channeling French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, his new writing would "totally renounce the language that journalism has abused and

corrupted" by returning "to the innermost alchemy of the word. . . ."[19] The resulting verses, which he incanted before the cabaret's audience, reduced language to nearly pure phonetics that signified little beyond the sounds themselves.[20] The word "Dada" itself, for example, meant a number of things in different languages, but in its great semantic mobility it also meant nothing at all. Each use of the name was a performed "farce of nothingness," as Ball described the group's antics.[21]

One year after its Swiss birth, Dada landed in wartime Berlin carried by one of its cofounders, Richard Huelsenbeck.[22] Always politically motivated at some level, the movement developed an expressly politicized character in the starved and depressed German capital. "Instead of continuing to produce art," as Huelsenbeck declared in 1920, "Dada . . . went out and found an adversary."[23] It was this political attack, informed by high art, popular performance, advertising, and avant-garde precedents, that Heartfield would soon translate into film.

Because of the ideological pressures of Weimar-era communism and the Stalinist regimes that followed, however, the party-true Heartfield/Herzfelde brothers learned to discuss their early film work as a mere footnote to the photomontage and book-publishing projects for which they became famous.[24] Their hesitation to discuss this work is not surprising. By agreeing to make propaganda films for Germany's Foreign Office during the war, they and Grosz opened themselves to criticism for having "enlightened" audiences about a conflict they later claimed to have rabidly opposed.[25] The details of their work, however, reveal a more tortured picture than such quick judgment allows.

The central figure in this period of their professional lives was the similarly entangled Count (Graf) Harry Kessler. Although a member of Prussia's heavily right-wing and philistine aristocracy, Kessler had long distinguished himself as a patron of modernist art and literature.[26] He was an enthusiastic gatherer of young writers and artists (some of whom exhibited the good looks enjoyed by the rather openly gay count.) His editorial position at the Jugendstil art magazine *PAN*, his role as honorary head of Weimar's Museum für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe (Museum of Art and Applied Art), his collaboration with the Insel Verlag (Island Press), and his own Cranach Verlag all provided him good venues to promote pioneering talent. As a patron with a large bank account, he plucked some of the twentieth century's most notable writers from obscurity and provided them with a meal ticket while audience for modernist literature remained limited.

One of these young protégés was the morphine-addicted expressionist poet Johannes Becher, whom Kessler met in March 1916. Although introduced through the aristocratic Mechtilde von und zu Arco-Zinneberg, Becher offered Kessler access to a decidedly nonaristocratic faction of Berlin's bohemian youth, many of whom had come together in opposition to the war.[27] Chief among these was the young Wieland Herzfelde, whom Becher ushered to the count's apartment for a breakfast appointment on September 28.[28] At the time, Herzfelde was soliciting funds for *Die neue Jugend* (*New Youth*), of which he had just assumed editorial control. Although

the revamped serial now disseminated a subtly antiwar message, Becher correctly anticipated the count's interest in Herzfelde's stable of cutting-edge contributors.[29] Judging from Kessler's diary entries, the "handsome . . . energetic and work-hardy" Herzfelde made a strong impression, and the two met regularly thereafter. In the course of soliciting Kessler's financial support, Herzfelde introduced him to the painter who was contributing most of *Die neue Jugend*'s art and the commercial artist who designed its layout: George Grosz and Helmut Herzfeld.

When he first met Herzfelde, in September 1916, Kessler was about to embark on a mission that would seem irreconcilably contrary to the *Neue Jugend* project: disseminating government-sponsored cultural propaganda to neutral countries in order to bolster Germany's war-battered prestige.[30] Since the conflict's outset, imperial Germany had suffered the sting of an Allied propaganda effort that declared the country barbaric and labeled its soldiers "Huns," largely for having invaded Belgium. The German army had indeed violated this small nation's neutrality in an effort to conquer France from the north. The subsequent occupation, along with the repression of a resistant population, led to reports of abuses, which the French and British morphed into powerful "hate propaganda," as German partisans disdainfully called it.

Among those offended by this campaign were the great majority of Germany's political and cultural elite. What stung them was not just the overwrought accusation of atrocities but the implication that only a culturally inferior nation of militarists could generate such inhumanity. On October 4, 1914, ninety-three of Germany's most notable academics, writers, and artists issued a call "To the World of Culture!" that alternately contested and defended these accounts of Belgian atrocity. In a stunning move, the signatories declared the "fight against our so-called militarism" to be "a fight against our culture." With a retort that became typical, "the 93" insisted, "Believe us! Believe that we will fight this struggle to its end as a cultured people, a people for whom the legacy of Goethe, Beethoven, or Kant is just as holy as home and soil."[31] According to these men (all of the signatories were male), the German war effort, whatever its manifestations, constituted a laudable and civilized extension of German cultural accomplishment. Unfortunately for them, however, the effort to gild Prussian militarism with the luster of German high culture backfired. In the eyes of foreign readers of this declaration, Goethe and Kant suddenly appeared denuded of their noble surface, leaving only an ugly militarist core. Indeed, the French philologist Émile Bédier and his colleague Émile Durkheim answered "To the World of Culture!" with just this assertion.[32]

Propaganda focusing on alleged German atrocities only became more vociferous as the conflict stagnated into trench warfare. German high culture, now firmly linked to the military's excesses, saw its international reputation plunge. By the fall of 1916, when Kessler first met Herzfelde, both the German High Command, under its new leader, Erich Ludendorff, and the German Foreign Office wished to stage a cultural counteroffensive. Shortly after this point, Kessler's name entered their sights.

The Foreign Office began devising a covert plan to solicit and subsidize German cultural products for distribution in neutral countries. A key figure in this scheme was the German ambassador to Switzerland, Konrad-Gisbert Freiherr von Romberg. He and the art historian Eberhard von Bodenhausen, an old friend of Kessler's, conspired to have the count designated as the chief of this effort.[33] Once approved, Kessler proceeded to open an office in Bern's German embassy and threw himself into the effort to produce, as von Romberg proposed, "a wide-ranging program of cultural propaganda, including theater, music performances, and art exhibitions but also variety shows and 'pretty girls.'"[34] Given Kessler's interest in modern art, he naturally placed greater emphasis on the country's cutting-edge culture than on its popular taste for seductive femininity.

Although the Foreign Office competed informally with the military's High Command, the former suggested that the count keep the Command informed of his progress. Accordingly, he met Ludendorff near the western front in November 1916. It may have been then if not earlier that Kessler learned of the "First Quartermaster's" outspoken interest in organizing film propaganda.[35] Within a year, the count had blanketed Switzerland with concerts of modernist German music, exhibitions of modernist German art, and readings of contemporary German literature. But his most ambitious step came in commissioning new German films that were to reflect the progressive aesthetic spirit of the culture he was promoting. At this point, Heartfield entered the picture.[36]

Though Heartfield had earlier found great success in his advertising career, he had only recently been involved in film. Before the middle months of 1917, he seems to have found employment with the Greenbaum Film Company in Berlin. This engagement likely stood behind one of *Die neue Jugend*'s numerous public events being dedicated solely to the cinema (*Kino*) industry.[37] Despite this relatively limited experience with film, the war's conditions made him and Kessler quite useful to each other. Heartfield possessed the practical talent and close bohemian friendships that Kessler needed for his new art and film endeavors. In exchange, the count could offer Heartfield exciting employment, good pay, and a release from military service, the last of which Heartfield had furiously sought since October 1915, when he attacked his commanding officer.[38] From their first meeting, during one of Kessler's trips through Berlin, Heartfield hit it off with the busy aristocrat almost as well as his brother had in the previous year. In a diary entry on November 14, 1917, the count reported:

> Before my table was Helmut Herzfeld. With him we discussed film and the founding of a new film company that would be funded by the Foreign Office and [the] Oliver [Film Company] and whose artistic director he should be. He has many new, good and delightful ideas.[39]


Sieh einmal, hier ſteht er,
Pfui! der Struwwelpeter!
An den Händen beiden
Ließ er ſich nicht ſchneiden
Seine Nägel faſt ein Jahr;
Kämmen ließ er nicht ſein Haar.
Pfui! ruft da ein Jeder:
Garſt'ger Struwwelpeter!

Fig. 4.1
Heinrich Hoffman, *Der Struwwelpeter*, 1845. Art & Architecture Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Two weeks later, Heartfield committed his "good and delightful ideas" to paper and sent them to Kessler for approval. His manuscript-length letter fortunately survives as a carbon copy that he sent to George Grosz on the same date, December 3, 1917. In this missive, the newfound director proposed a series of formally inventive animated and puppet-based propaganda films "of a thoroughly objective high quality, into which scarcely perceivable political intentions can be woven." Specifically at the outset, he recommended topical themes based on German fairy tales in which, for example, "an unobtrusively political Struwwelpeter" would impart desirable messages through aphoristic fantasy and creative rendering.[40]

Considering Kessler's charge to showcase progressive German culture, *Der Struwwelpeter* was an unlikely choice. Originally published by Heinrich Hoffmann in 1845, the collection of tales would call to mind Germany's illustrious nineteenth-century literary past (fig. 4.1). But the stories' strange violence risked confirming a view of the country as barbaric. Hoffmann's narratives, notably, prescribe gruesome consequences for children who misbehave. For instance, the young "thumb sucker" Konrad sees his thumbs dismembered for compulsively continuing his habit. Heartfield, then, was prepared to play a subtle game: stroking nationalist pride while confirming foreign condemnation of German culture as barbaric. Were these the "scarcely perceivable political intentions" he wished to weave into his film work?

Perhaps, in a quiet way, Heartfield was referencing *Der politische Struwwelpeter*, an 1849 political satire by Henry Ritter based on Hoffmann's tales.[41] The parody's most famous plate depicts a figure sporting the many heads of Germany's political and clerical entities, a graphic suggestion that no such amalgamation of leaders could create a workable republic following the bourgeois revolutions of March 1848 (fig. 4.2). The visible discomfort of each head, crowded atop a single political body and made to realize a monstrous creation, conveys this point by eliciting the sort of corporeal revulsion that the original *Struwwelpeter* had provoked. Exacerbating this effect is the ill-fitting jacket, torn and haphazardly patched with numerous coats of arms, suggesting the figure's sloppy nationalist and ideological makeup. Heartfield must have understood that such satire sprang from the sort of bohemian and politically varied culture that Kessler found attractive and now wished to foreground as a more appealing representation of Germany's intellectual achievements. The obvious model for this approach was *Die neue Jugend,* to which the count had begun offering financial support a year earlier.[42] In his letter, Heartfield assured Kessler that his use of nineteenth-century literary and visual models would provide film viewers with quickly intelligible conceits that were both entertainingly seductive and politically satirical.

Of course, this mix of seduction and revulsion is nearly the same effect that Heartfield achieved over the next two decades with photomontages that ferociously attacked the National Socialists and problematically raged against Weimar-era Ger-


I. Der politiſche Struwwelpeter.
Sieh einmal, hier ſteht er,
Der deutſche Struwwelpeter,
Viele Köpfe hat er,
Manche Unart that er.
Theils iſt er guter Royaliſt,
Theils mäßig und theils Terroriſt.
Bald iſt er Preuß' bald Oeſtreich's Kind,
Bald luther'ſch und bald röm'ſch geſinnt;
Bald iſt er Wühler, Heuler bald,
Er trägt ein Röcklein morſch und alt,
Mit ſechs und dreißig Flicken
Bedeckt 's ihm kaum den Rücken.
Wenn er den Rock nicht wechſeln thut,
Ergeht es nimmermehr ihm gut,
Es ruft ſodann ein Jeder,
Pfui, garſt'ger Struwwelpeter!

Fig. 4.2
Henry Ritter, *Der politische Struwwelpeter*, in *Der politische Struwwelpeter. Ein Versuch zur Einigung Deutschlands* (*The Political Struwwelpeter: An Attempt at the Unity of Germany*; Düsseldorf: Buddaeus, 1849). Staatsbibliothek Bamberg. MvO.Art69, Tafel 1. Photo: Gerald Raab.

Fig. 4.3 (opposite)
John Heartfield, *S. M. Adolf: Ich führe Euch herrlichen Pleiten entgegen!* (*His Majesty Adolf: I Will Lead You to Glorious Bankruptcies!*), *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* 11, no. 32 (August 21, 1932): 795. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (87-S194). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

S.M. ADOLF



Fotomontage: John Heartfield

Ich

führe Euch herrlichen Pleiten entgegen!

many's Social Democrats. In one anti-Nazi photomontage of 1932 that echoes *Der politische Struwwelpeter* with uncanny precision, Heartfield appropriated a portrait of Adolf Hitler snapped by the future tyrant's personal photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann, to which he then added the trappings of Kaiser Wilhelm's militarist drag (fig. 4.3).[43] Subjected to Heartfield's surgical refashioning, the portrait becomes a photographic biopsy revealing Hitler's discredited imperial model. The cuts entailed by the montage process are smoothed over, but the figure's visual awkwardness communicates its historically uncomfortable suturing.[44] The outsize lapels, the mismatch between the left and right sides of his uniform, the tipped helmet with its messily oversize plume, Wilhelm's trademark mustache sporting upturned fringes, and the general obscuring of Hitler's body all prefigure the slapdash ideological formation of this latter-day political *Struwwelpeter*.

In the 1920s and 1930s Heartfield would become notorious for the highly legible satirical power of his visual conceits, a merciless wit that his 1917 letter to Kessler, in proposing the use of nineteenth-century folktales as propaganda, begins to highlight. But as his 1932 montage demonstrates, Heartfield specifically applied these conceits in photography. Like a demonic surgeon working in the operating theater of counterpublicity, he cut away or transformed precisely those carefully cultivated *photographic* terms that were most critical to the successful functioning of his enemy's pictorial corpus. In this case, Hitler's signature mustache, his paramilitary outfit, and even his generalized look of piercing concentration are reordered by Heartfield's montage. Thus reconfigured, they unmistakably recall the discredited imperial ruler who led Germany into "glorious bankruptcies" (*herrliche Pleiten*) rather than the "glorious times" (*herrliche Zeiten*) he had promised at the First World War's outset.

Operating with and through photography, Heartfield used the medium's powerful visual fidelity not for its capacity to record surface appearances but rather for its seeming ability to reveal underlying contradictions, a hidden stratum that gives perceivable surfaces their distorted shape. In so doing, he encouraged "a sense of reality bearing its own interpretation," as Rosalind Krauss has suggested of his images.[45] The ability to create such an impression through the sudden transformation of photographically encoded meaning—through a powerful visual strike—is typical of Heartfield's most famous work.

Yet in his 1917 letter to Kessler, the future photomonteur proposed films whose satirical conceits would be based on hand-drawn animation and craft-oriented puppetry, not on reordered photographic film footage. Indeed, throughout his correspondence, Heartfield repeatedly asserts the advantages of *not* deploying the photographic basis of live-action film for his work. Given that he had already toyed with photomontaged postcards and would later pioneer the technique of politically powerful avant-garde photomontage, why would he forswear the technique's closest equivalent in cinema?

Of course, Heartfield could have had a number of practical reasons for eschewing live-action cinema, one being the opportunity animation gave him to employ

Grosz's drawing talent. Kessler had visited Grosz's studio on November 18, 1917, and expressed a near intoxicated pleasure with the artist's images.[46] Thus, the prospect of animation created in collaboration with Grosz was almost guaranteed to win the count's approval. Later, in early 1918, Kessler was so impressed with the first rushes of the men's cinematic work that he advised the Foreign Office to finance a series of propaganda posters and postcards bearing the film's images.[47]

Just as important in Heartfield's push for animation was its relative freshness as a cinematic technique.[48] Pioneers such as Paul Wegener, famous for his 1913 *Student of Prague*, had already broken new ground in live-action cinema. In 1916 Wegener had begun to propose even more cutting-edge developments in "expressionist film," thereby commandeering yet more authoritatively a live-action format that Heartfield could enter only as a neophyte.[49] It was just such novelty that Heartfield had to claim in order to meet Kessler's cinematic charge. Animation and puppet play, therefore, offered the greenest fields in which to sow the seeds of his and Grosz's bohemian creativity.

Yet Heartfield's letter stated his case against live-action film in largely technical terms. The medium's traditional tether to reality, he asserted, could scarcely accommodate the fantastical "tricks and grotesques" he hoped to deploy. It is here that he advanced the superiority of animated and puppet-driven alternatives. In proposing the adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's *Masque of the Red Death*, for example, he wrote, "One cannot realize the story in film with naturalistic notions. It would merely remain a poor handling whose effect would lie disappointingly behind that of the written story itself." This effect was one that Poe had achieved through highly stylized writing at the expense of narrative. The lush description of Prince Prospero's palace, where each room bears a rich and distinct color, suspends the story's development, transforming the tale into a series of intense color-mood associations. Realizing this sublime effect in black-and-white live-action film would be nearly impossible, Heartfield explained.

Similarly, Poe's baroque descriptions of eerie sounds could scarcely find their equivalents in a silent medium, unless performed live in the movie theater. Heartfield was keenly aware of this challenge, noting the difficulty his contemporaries had had in using live-action film to suggest sound. As he explained to Kessler in his letter, "The film people of today would show the clock," striking each hour toward the story's midnight climax, "as excessively large or somewhat mysterious, but never to a shocking effect." To assure no mild metaphor of temporal passage but instead, the strike of shock that Poe describes as "clear and loud and deep," Heartfield proposed turning to the wild and dynamic visual possibilities of animation. The resulting freedom from lived realty would afford him the best means to construct these shocking and marvelous effects. For example, he could banish "today's ghastly intertitles" and embed their text directly in the images. As a result, "every intertitle," as he continued to call them, "would become yet more thrilling, with a brevity that triggers a pounding style." The effect overall, he promised, "would be eerie, flittering, and grotesque."

With animation, he could also borrow directly from painted or drawn precedents. The *Red Death*'s climactic masked ball, for example, could draw on James Ensor's 1889 painting *The Entry of Christ into Brussels* "or other grotesque fantastic pictures." The moving images that resulted would be highly distorted and shockingly expressive, providing an alternative definition of "expressionist film" that would leave even "Wegener's recent fairy tale films in the dust." The same would be true of one of the other surprisingly inappropriate film subjects he proposed during this war of terrifying facial injuries: an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*.

But Heartfield's proposed cinematic expressionism was not just a matter of figural distortion. It also heralded "a radical new film technique of ordering and spatial planning" that live-action film, even through montage, could not produce. Such "representational possibilities" in the case of the *Red Death* allowed him to "picture from high above a swarming and small mass of humans who are pursued by horror, by falling balustrades and walls."

The use of puppet play, he went on to explain, also provided a release from the live action of human actors and, therefore, allowed for the production of unusually stimulating films "built on extensive, swift, and successive events." At this tempo "everything marvelous can happen, a mountain explodes, houses collapse." "Because there is no facial expression," he added, "the emphasis must be placed on movement, on suddenness, and on surprise." In his promotion of animation and puppetry, Heartfield made a case for no less than "an absolute redesign of film, a break with the rotten old traditions" of commercial cinema, and essentially, "a new form of visual thinking."

It is exactly here, in the sensorial and conceptual novelty of animation- and puppet-based expressionist film—in the grotesque figures, radical compression of time frames, and marvelous action made possible by a release from live action—that Heartfield declared his work's "scarcely perceivable political intentions." For he equated this novelty with "quality" and quality, in turn, with persuasion:

> More than films with hidden, political-propagandistic ideas, such as those that the English produce particularly well . . ., is the effect of a thoroughly objective film of quality. . . . Quality can never be bypassed. Even though America is our enemy, we praise American films, their quality must be recognized. They accomplish a propagandistic effect. Those who hate Germany are not easily persuaded with political resourcefulness. . . . Quality [by contrast] will always conquer, convince, carry one along, provoke one to think, and persuade, *and it is therefore the best propaganda*.

In declaring cinematic quality itself "the best propaganda," Heartfield focused squarely on Kessler's mission to advance a more creative and varied German culture. But he also interpreted the count's cultural charge as a license to devise just about any subject and any style for his work. The purchase on "quality" provided by animation and puppetry, coupled with the release from live action, allowed Heartfield

to propose "a new form of visual thinking" that was both unusually stirring and surprisingly violent.

To a significant extent, in fact, Heartfield's new and unsettling visuality, made possible by animation and puppetry, reached not for the newest but for the earliest forms of cinema, a sort of film in which narrative conceits had yet to conquer the direct and unsettling stimulation he now prized. This early "cinema of attractions," as Tom Gunning describes it, avoided self-enclosed fictional worlds to revel in the medium's newly sensational optical experience, "directly solicit[ing] spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle." As was the case in Heartfield's proposals, "the attraction to be displayed may . . . be of a cinematic nature, such as the early close-ups . . ., or trick films in which a cinematic manipulation (slow motion, reverse motion, substitution, multiple exposure) provides the film's novelty." Much like this early spectacle-based cinema, Heartfield's animation focused on "the direct stimulation of shock or surprise at the expense of the unfolding story," in his case foregrounding color, rushing movement, feigned sound, quick flashing and abrupt switching.[50] These same techniques would recall a *Sensationsfilm* when realized mere months later at Dada's first 1918 lecture evening.

We should not be surprised, then, that Heartfield suggested a slew of aggressive and Anglo-American subjects beyond his opening ideas for adaptations of German fairy tales. At a time when the Great War's mass slaughter was mediated through newsreels and narrative films, most of which foregrounded heroic death and gently shared sacrifice, Heartfield proposed films about the Red Death, Dorian Gray, and the tyranny of trauma in puppetry. In these films, he planned to depict grotesque figures "pursued by horror" while "a mountain explodes" and "houses collapse." To carry out these ambitious plans, however, the film novice Heartfield needed a model, and he ultimately found one in America.

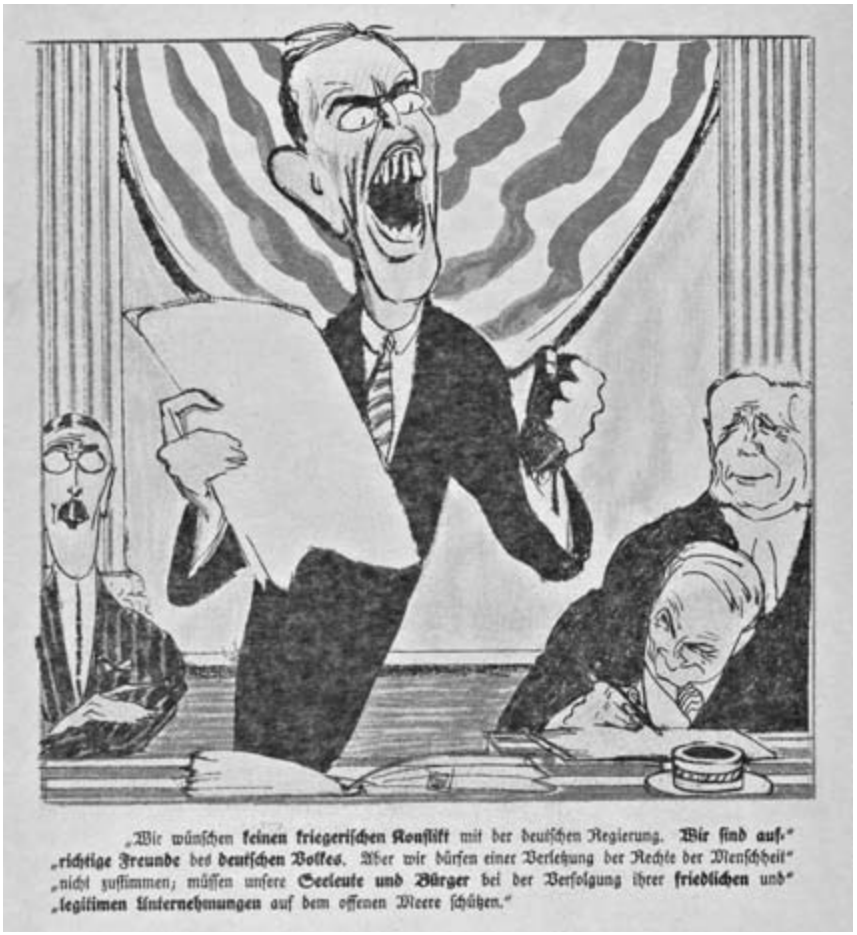
THE REALIZED FILMS: AMERICAN ANIMATION AND SOMATIC TRANSCRIPTION

The only one of his films that Heartfield managed to preserve was supposedly stolen from his Berlin apartment in 1922.[51] But a series of letters, official documents, and other evidence reveal that the young director most likely completed three films in mid-1918 with the dedicated help of Grosz and Herzfelde. These features were *Sammy in Europe*, a satire of the June–July 1917 landing of Americans in France; *The Drawing Hand*, a visual narration of the week's news in which a scribing hand creates figures that become animated; and *German Soldier Songs*, a story acted out with puppets, which, after the war, Heartfield later transformed for Max Reinhardt's Schall und Rauch (Smoke and Mirrors) cabaret (fig. 4.4).

By April 1918 Kessler could write the following message to his liaison in Berlin's Foreign Office headquarters:



Der „konservative" Herr (und John Heartfield).



„Wir wünschen **keinen kriegerischen Konflikt** mit der deutschen Regierung. **Wir sind auf-**"
„**richtige Freunde** des **deutschen Volkes.** Aber wir dürfen einer Verletzung der Rechte der Menschheit"
„nicht zustimmen; müssen unsere **Seeleute und Bürger** bei der Verfolgung ihrer **friedlichen** und"
„**legitimen Unternehmungen** auf dem offenen Meere schützen."

Fig. 4.4 (left)
John Heartfield with his puppet *Der "konservative" Herr* (the "conservative" gentleman), 1920. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Fig. 4.5 (right)
Page from *Bluff. Worte und Taten des ehrenwerten Mister Wilson, Präsident der Ver. Staaten von Amerika* (*Bluff: Words and Deeds of the Honorable Mister Wilson, President of the United States of America*), 1917. Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

The parts of [*Sammy in Europe*] that I saw in Berlin were very successful and mean something completely new for the German film industry. . . . Although what the film prophesied has actually become a fact, that the American help for France turns out to be an enormous bluff, propagandistically the feature still seems effective, correct, and current.[52]

At the time that Kessler wrote this message, America's entry into the war still seemed halfhearted, at least according to wishful German thinking. But more specifically, and with his conservative overseers in mind, he was probably seeking to associate this "completely new" sort of film with a recent propaganda booklet entitled *Bluff. Worte und Taten des ehrenwerten Mister Wilson, Präsident der Ver. Staaten von Amerika* (*Bluff. Words and Deeds of the Honorable Mister Wilson, President of the United States of America*; fig. 4.5). This tract was an aggressive but otherwise traditional satire that the Military Division of the Foreign Office had commissioned in late 1917.[53] Heartfield's film may have safely followed an officially approved precedent, but it did so in order to smuggle in the avant-garde "quality" that he first proffered to Kessler in his December 1917 letter, and that Kessler now enthusiastically endorsed.

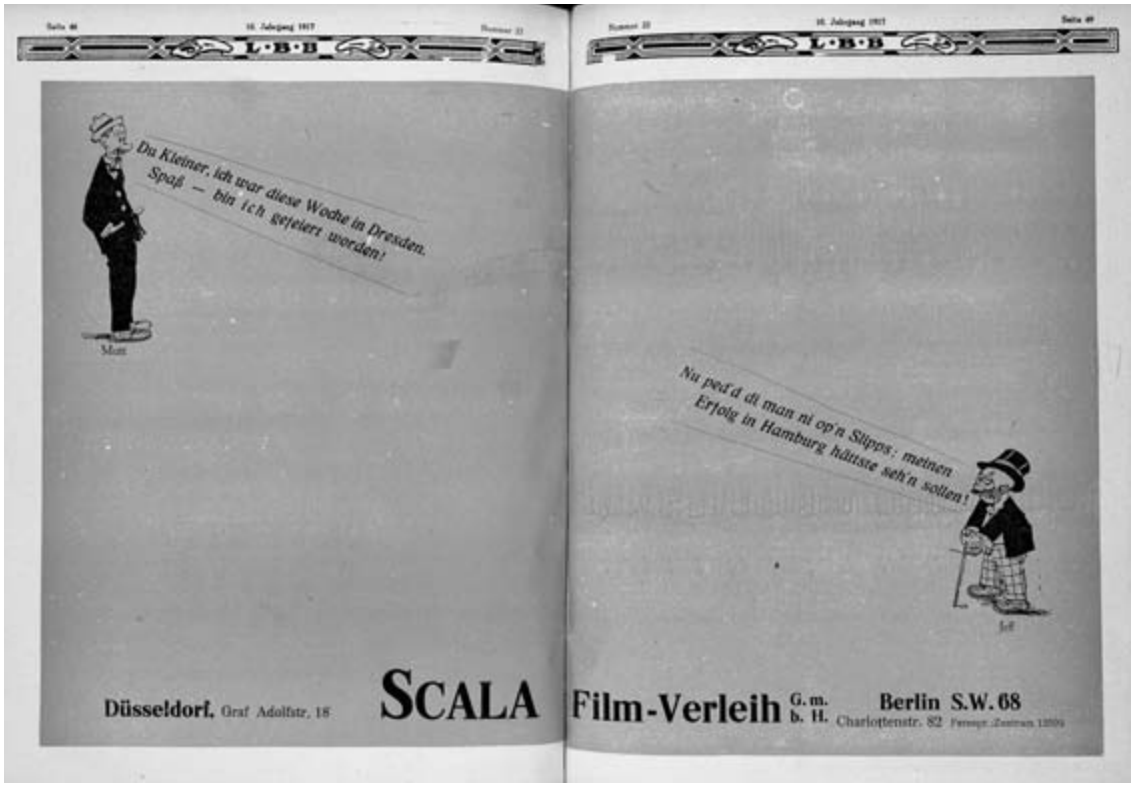

LOBB
Du Kleiner, ich war diese Woche in Dresden. Spaß — bin ich gefeiert worden!
Mutt
LOBB
Nu pad'd di man ni op'n Slipps: meinen Erfolg in Hamburg hättste seh'n sollen!
Jeff
Düsseldorf, Graf Adolfstr. 18
SCALA
Film-Verleih G. m. b. H.
Berlin S.W. 68
Charlottenstr. 82

Fig. 4.6
Advertisement for Mutt and Jeff films, *Licht-Bild-Bühne*, no. 23 (June 9, 1917), 48–49. Mutt says, "My little one, I was in Dresden this weekend. Fun—I was celebrated." Jeff first responds in Plattdeutsch and then adds, "You should have seen my success in Hamburg." Staatsbilbliothek, Berlin.

Elsewhere in this April 1918 communiqué, Kessler reports that Heartfield made the film "in the style of American hand-animated films." Here he had to be referring to the only American cartoon series that German citizens could see in commercial theaters at the time. Though the import of foreign films, particularly features from enemy countries, was severely restricted, a handful of movies seemingly selected for their pure entertainment value were nonetheless approved for distribution. The only animated shorts among them were the Mutt and Jeff cartoons, a series created by Charles Bowers and distributed throughout Germany in mid-1917 by the Scala and Flora Film companies (fig. 4.6).[54] Mutt and Jeff cartoons were drawn with particularly high quality for their time, using slapstick action, exaggerated gesture, and physically impossible stunts to create humor.

Wieland Herzfelde later recalled that his brother's films strongly resembled the book covers that Heartfield designed in 1936 for a four-volume reprint of *The Good Soldier Svejk* (fig. 4.7).[55] Like the films, these images relied on hand-drawn figures and showcased, for example, the hapless, rheumatic soldier Svejk being carted into war through the photographed streets of Prague. The attraction Heartfield hoped to solicit with these covers, however, was not demonstratively slapstick. Instead, he seems to have been interested in the purely optical juxtaposition of appropriated photographs and figures drawn by the Czech artist Josef Lada.[56] Considering Grosz's hand in the animation project, however, the films more likely resembled

Fig. 4.7
John Heartfield, book cover for reprint of Jaroslaw Haseck, *Dobry vojak Svejk. Osudy dobreho vojaka Svejka v ruskem zajeti. (The Good Soldier Svejk: The Adventures of the Good Soldier Svejk as a Prisoner of War in Russia*), 1936. Gladys N. Anderson Fund, Art Institute of Chicago. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

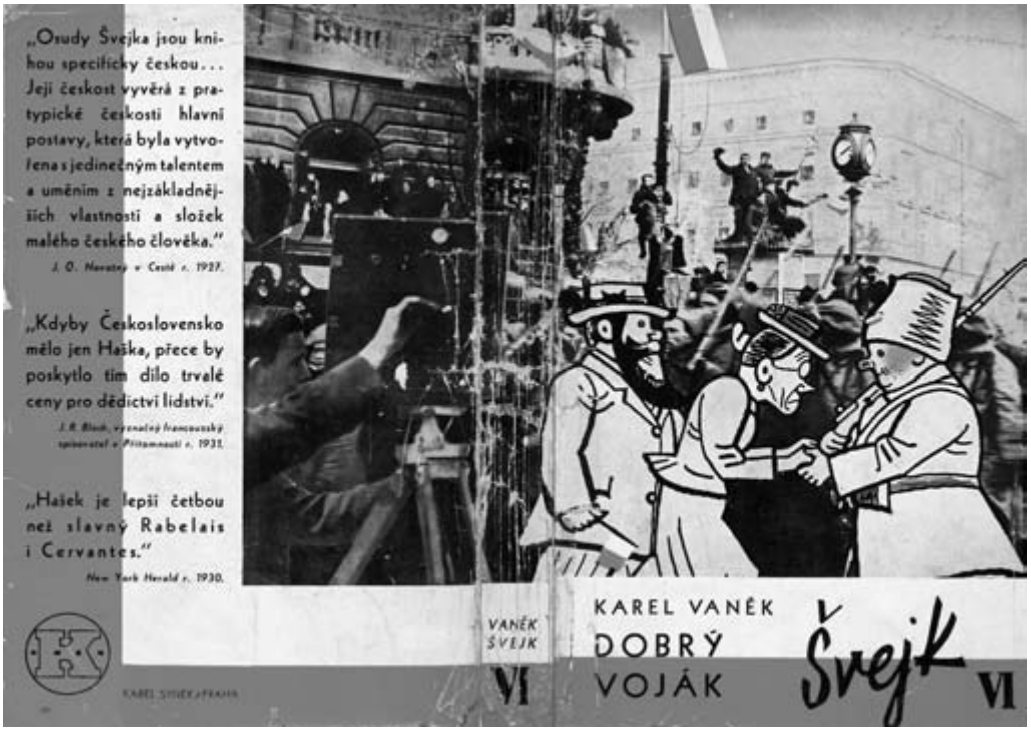

„Osudy Švejka jsou knihou specificky českou... Její českost vyvěrá z pratypické českosti hlavní postavy, která byla vytvořena s jedinečným talentem a uměním z nejzákladnějších vlastností a složek malého českého člověka."
J. O. Novotný v České r. 1927.
„Kdyby Československo mělo jen Haška, přece by poskytlo tím dílo trvalé ceny pro dědictví lidství."
J. R. Bloch, významný francouzský spisovatel v Příteomnosti r. 1931.
„Hašek je lepší četbou než slavný Rabelais i Cervantes."
New York Herald r. 1930.
VANĚK ŠVEJK VI
KAREL VANĚK
DOBRÝ VOJÁK
Švejk VI

Fig. 4.8 (below)
George Grosz, *Randzeichnungen zum Thema* (*Marginal Sketches on the Theme*) in "Abenteuer des braven Soldaten Schwejk," *Blätter der Piscatorbühne* (*Pages of the Piscator Theater*), no. 14, January 1928. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (85-B23255). © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

Randzeichnungen zum Thema.



Als John Heartfield und ich 1916 in meinem Südender-Atelier an einem Maientage frühmorgens um 5 Uhr die Photomontage erfanden, ahnten wir beide weder die großen Möglichkeiten, noch den dornenvollen, aber erfolgreichen Weg, den diese Entdeckung nehmen sollte. Wie das eben so manchmal im Leben ist, wir waren auf eine Goldader gestoßen, ohne es zu wissen. Gleichzeitig zogen ja überall damals junge Abenteurer los, in das unbekannte Land Dada — und gewisse Entdeckungen liegen ja stets fast fertig in der Luft. Einer der Unseren war auch Erwin, der damals noch im Flandernbogen Feldsoldat war. Er hatte schon von uns gehört und drückte seine Sympathie durch Teesendungen aus. (Es war in der Zeit des mit eisernem Kreuz geschmückten Kunsthonigs, und das sogenannte Kriegsmus aß man als Brotbelag — alles gegen Marke). Erwin, kühn und zäh wie sein Vorfahr, der alte streitbare Bibelübersetzer Piscatorius, hielt die spitze Nase stramm gegen den Wind, ebenso, wie wir leidenschaftlich ausschauend nach neuen Möglichkeiten. Ich weiß, daß er schon damals den Plan der Piscatorbühne fix und fertig mit sich herum trug. Weißt Du noch, Erwin, wie Du, lange vor den Russen, als Regiewart auf hoher Leiter die berühmte Dada-Matinée leitetest, während hinten Einer langgezogene, grobschlächtige Reden aus den *Vu*lissen ins Publikum heulte? Das nebenbei.

Künste gemeinsam umfassenden Gesamtkunstwerk. Welch hehrer Traum und Gedanke, welche Möglichkeit ,— welcher erweiterte Spielraum für den modernen Bühnenzauber! Erwin sieht, wie jeder einigermaßen sehende Mensch, zum Beispiel auch den fürchterlich lächerlichen Kunstbetrieb heute, den Aktienbetrieb, die reine Börsenchose und, Predigernatur, sucht er phrophetisch die Kunst auch hier auf eine größere Wirkungsbahn hinzulenken — (in ein breiteres Bett des Wirkens hinzulenken, und die begabten Maler, Zeichner, z. B. in sinngemäßer Anwendung ihrer Gottesgaben zu unterweisen, immer im Sinne einer nichtzuverachtenden höheren Entwickelung des Mitmenschen, eben einer Idee) — wieder die Bühne zu einer wirklich-moralischen Anstalt zu machen, d .h. den Mitmenschen zu erheben, zu läutern, zu bessern und zu erfreuen und bei Bedarf zu erschüttern.

So stellte Erwin einfach für den Zeichner ein gewaltiges Zeichenbrett, mit weißem Papier bespannt, hinten auf der Szene auf, und ich begleite darauf das Bühnenspiel mit großen Hyroglyphen, husche kontrapunktlich auf und ab, untermale, vielmehr zeichne die schönsten notwendigen Begleittexte und Haseksche Bosheiten, die unten ungesagt liegen. Tatsache, daß Erwin hier eine ganz große Wirkungsstelle für neue Graphik geschaffen hat, wahrhaft eine zeichnerische Manege, für den Zeichner von 1928 verlockender als muffiger Aestethenbetrieb und bibliophile graphische Höckereien für die feinen Leute mit Bildung.

Hier können nun die oft zitierten „Daumiers" der Zeit menetekeln, und die Schrecken an die Wand malen — wirklich besser die Graphik auf Bänder zu ziehen, als in schönem Rahmen unter Glas oder als Scharteke im Schrank. Welch Mittel für den Künstler, der zur Masse schlechthin sprechen will. Natürlich, eine neue Fläche erfordert neue Mittel, neue, klare, knappe Zeichenstilsprache — sicher große Erziehungsmöglichkeit für Wirrköpfe und Chaotiker! Auch mit impressionistischem Husch-husch ist da nichts zu machen. Filmisch sei der Strich, klar, einfach und nicht zu dünn (wegen Ueberblendung), sei außerdem hart, etwa wie die Zeichnungen und Holzschnitte in gotischen Blockbüchern und die lapidaren Steinritzungen auf den Pyramiden.

Hier, junger Maler und Zeichner von 1928, steht Dir eine Wand zur Verfügung. Wenn Du was zu sagen hast, benutze sie!

George Grosz.

Jedenfalls setzte Erwin die Photo-Montage sinngemäß in den Bühnenrahmen ein, montierte den alten Kulissenzauber glatt um und gab der Bühne wieder jene Lebendigkeit und Geschehnisfülle, die das richtige Theater haben muß. Gehen Sie mal in ein X'beliebiges anderes gutes Theater, so werden Sie wissen, was ich meine. Wie viele Neulandsucher, bleibt Erwin bei einmal Erprobtem nicht stehen — ein Stück von der alten Wagner-Sehnsucht lebt auch in ihm, und so sehen wir ihn häufig auf der dornigen Suche nach dem großen alle

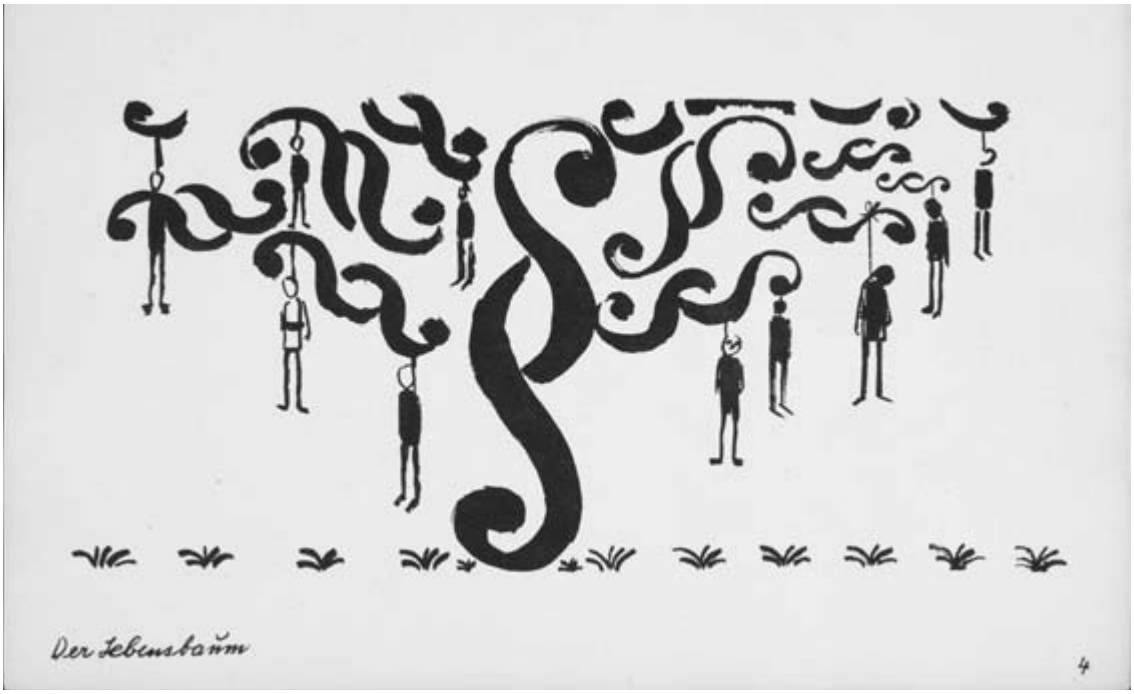


Fig. 4.9
George Grosz, *Der Lebensbaum* (*The Tree of Life*), from the portfolio *Hintergrund: 17 Zeichnungen zur Aufführung des "Schwejk" in der Piscator-Bühne* (*Background: 17 Drawings from the Performance of "Shvejk" in the Piscator Theater*), 1928, leaf 4. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (90-F69). © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

the animated strips that the painter composed for Erwin Piscator's 1928 play of the same name. With Heartfield's help, this later animated film was projected behind the play's actors much as the monteur had projected documentary footage in earlier Piscator performances.[57] In the playbill for *The Good Soldier Svejk*, a reproduced snippet of the film reveals its basis in Grosz's satirical drawing of the late 1920s (fig. 4.8). Reading this segment from the bottom, as if fed into a projector, one sees a barren tree resolve into section marks that reference the military clauses and regulations forcing men into combat. This tree of clauses then becomes a canopy of gallows sporting growing numbers of hanged bodies (fig. 4.9). Grosz's 1928 film, it seems, adopted a visual conceit in which the satirical meaning of his figures unfolded over time from the symbolic to the literal.[58]

It is also the case that Grosz nursed a particular fascination for the United States during World War I and just thereafter. This interest likely brought him and Heartfield, always great movie buffs, under the spell of the Mutt and Jeff features released to German audiences.[59] Moreover, according to Heartfield's December 1917 letter, Grosz was following Kessler's suggestion to base *Sammy in Europe*'s style on the artist's 1915–1916 print *Erinnerung an New York* (*Memory of New York*, fig. 4.10), a scrambled futurist invention that used a drawn montage of skyscrapers, elevated trains, flags, figures, and flying text to evoke the wild hubbub of the American metropolis. Heartfield, of course, was also looking toward the United States and its cinema, as his December 1917 letter clearly reveals. He and Grosz were so smitten with American cinema that they even applied to their official employer, the Foreign Office's News Department, to view painstakingly requisitioned foreign propaganda

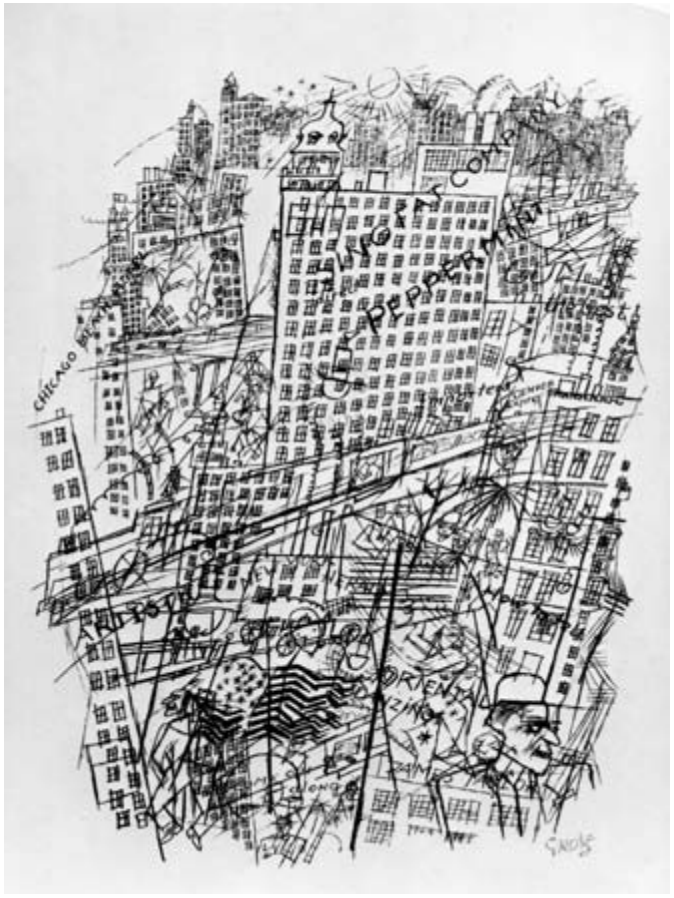
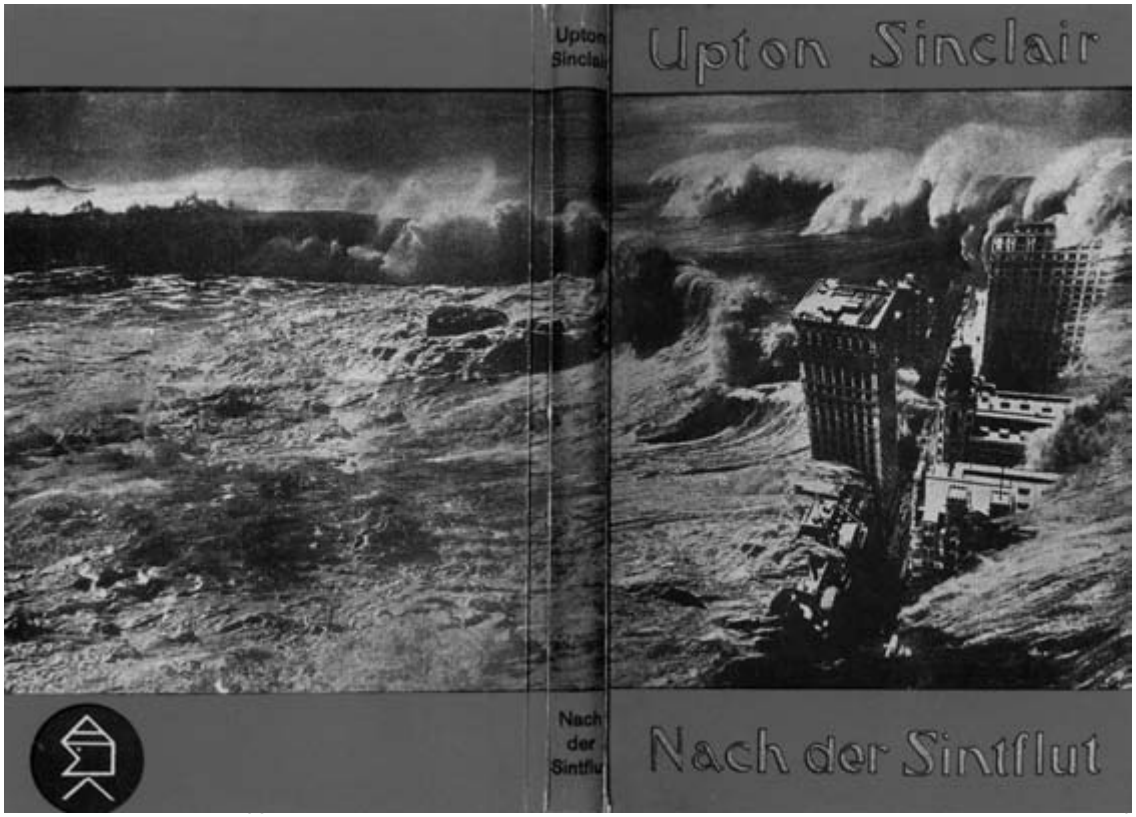


Fig. 4.10
George Grosz, *Erinnerung an New York* (*Memory of New York*), 1915–1916. From *Erste George-Grosz-Mappe* (*First George Grosz Portfolio*), 1917. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

Fig. 4.11 (below)
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *Nach der Sintflut* (*Millennium*; Berlin: Malik, 1925). Galerie Bassenge, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



films.[60] Considering that Kessler's Swiss office was now deeply preoccupied with the impact of American cinematic propaganda, these features were probably the ones that Heartfield and Grosz wished to see. Their request however, was denied, likely leaving the Mutt and Jeff series their exclusive model for American animation.[61]

Sammy in Europe, whose title elicited German visions of the archetypal African American jazz player, apparently cast the American presence on the Continent as a culturally catastrophic affair. Such a conceit would have appealed to German conservatives, who saw the evils of advertising, popular culture, and modernity in general as decadent "Amerikanismus."[62] Wieland later told the German film historian Hans Barkhausen that "what particularly impressed me [in this film] was the way in which . . . skyscrapers shot out of the French soil just after the Americans landed [in Port St. Nizarre]."[63] According to Dietrich Neumann, German audiences had come to view skyscrapers, like jazz music, as potent ciphers of modern American culture.[64] Heartfield and Grosz's films, it seems, made so many references to American culture as to effectively celebrate the country's modern and populist achievements. Heartfield later inserted just such half-enthralled/half-fearful references in his Weimar-era work. In fact, enthusiasts of the photomonteur will have already recognized in the above description of dynamically sprouting towers his 1927 dust cover for Upton Sinclair's *Millennium* (translated as *Nach der Sintflut*, or "After the Flood"; fig. 4.11), a composition showing New York skyscrapers overcome by colossal waves. Such

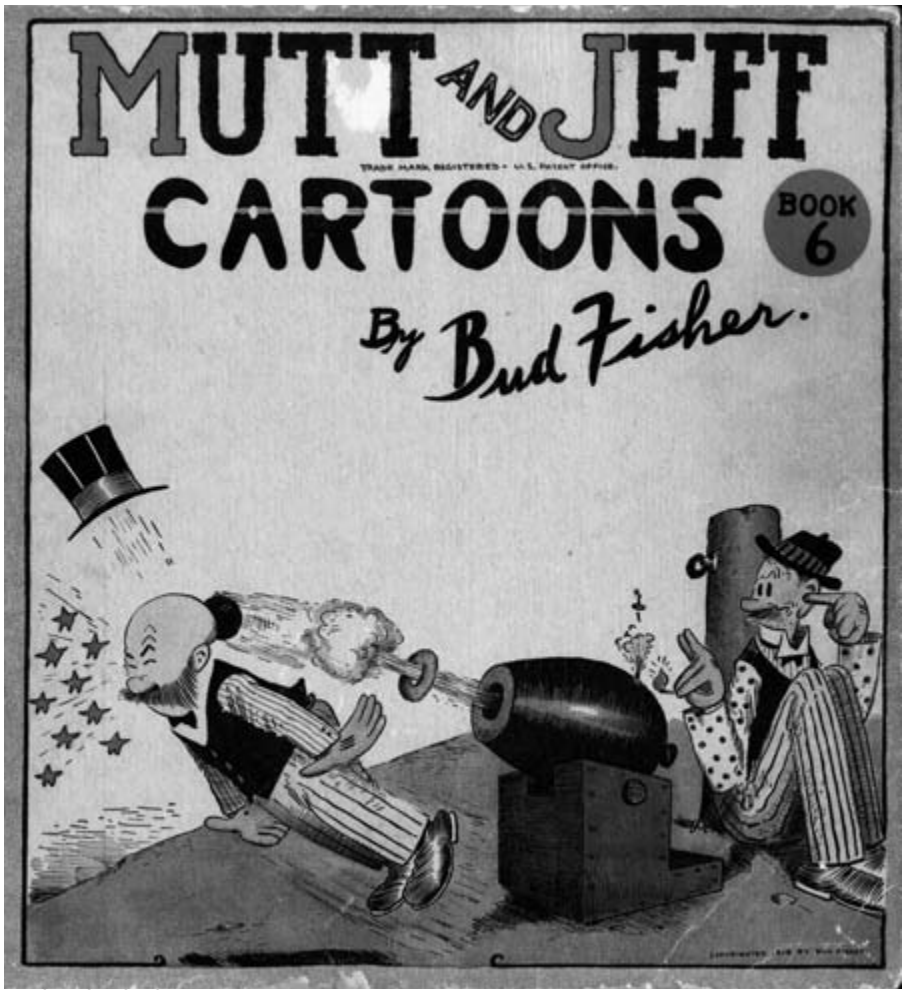


Fig. 4.12
Bud Fisher, *Mutt and Jeff Cartoons* (New York: Cupples and Leon, 1919).

were the alluring fantasies afforded by Americana and film animation, and later realized in photomontage.

But, as suggested above, another component of these films turned this strongly visual medium into a uniquely multisensory experience. American animated film in the silent era traced its heritage to the comic strip, where text and graphic marks compensated for the lack of movement and sound.[65] The Mutt and Jeff series, for example, began as just such a print comic, drawn by Bud Fisher (fig. 4.12). Although animation added the all-important element of motion, sound still had to be implied by heavy slapstick, graphic marks, and of course text. These elements granted early animation the power to tease viewers' somatic senses through purely optical stimulation.

With the model of Mutt and Jeff in mind, we may be able to discern the strategies Heartfield used in his animated films. None of the specific cartoons that passed Berlin's wartime censor have come to my attention for viewing, but slightly later features embed radiating and expanding text directly into the images. The 1922 cartoon *Mutt and Jeff—Invisible Revenge* (fig. 4.13) has Jeff stalking a cat for a scientific experiment in invisibility. As Jeff snaps after his prey, multiple instances of the word *kitty* rise sparklike from his fingers. In a later frame, a plaintive *mee-o-ow-w* flows like liquid from his tipped head. The cat answers with a gaping muzzle whose aperture helps convey the volume of its own *m-mee-o-ow-w*. The growing racket prompts someone offscreen to throw a shoe at Jeff's head, and the impact registers with an explosion of shooting stars. Later, as Jeff continues pursuing the cat, an aggressive dog chases him onto a window ledge and the similarly frightened cat climbs atop Jeff's back. A frightened man on the interior of this open window can see only the cat's rear and its excited tail. In a panic, he fires at the feline with a shotgun, the violent explosion marked by an expanding white puff and a gradually appearing *bang*. In the cartoon's climax, the same cat and dog, now requisitioned by Jeff, are both rendered invisible by the scientist's potion and placed in battle. Their subsequent fight is marked not by their moving figures but by their darting collars. From this void of invisible action shoot graphic marks, puffing clouds, and onomatopoeic texts. This invisible but vigorous and seemingly sonorous fight turns the scientist's lab into a ruin. Significantly, the text and graphic effects used in this film to indicate sound and movement largely disappeared from Mutt and Jeff cartoons once audio technology allowed recorded musical accompaniment.

In another silent Mutt and Jeff cartoon, Mutt repeatedly subjects Jeff to extreme violence in order to demonstrate that nothing can injure his small friend (Mutt hopes to collect on multiple accident insurance claims). *Accidents Won't Happen* (1925) shows Jeff assaulted by flowerpots, thrown from a train, and dropped from a plane, after which the character's deformed head oscillates left and right to register the impact. This curious motion attracts the attention of a lion, which mounts a final attack. Such an emphasis on violence and the optical transcription of its sonorous and tactile impact must have been stunning for contemporary audiences. Whether subjecting characters' heads to crushing impact, reducing fighting figures to dancing

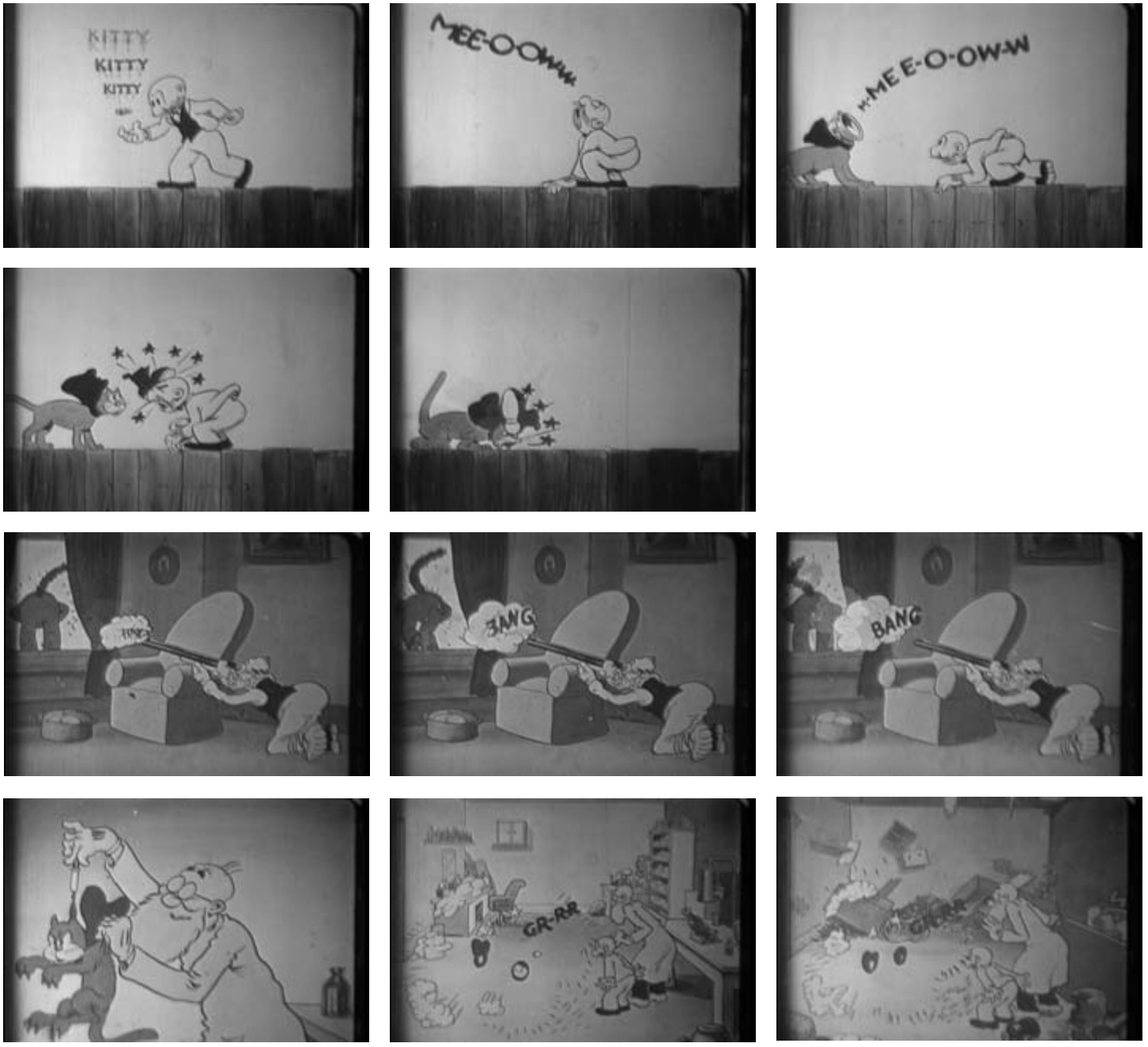


Fig. 4.13
Animation frames from Bud Fisher, *Mutt and Jeff—Invisible Revenge*. 1922. Screen captures by author.

text, or simply bombarding viewers with a diet of rubbery contortions, the cartoonist used his or her independence from experienced reality to represent a level of violence that would horrify spectators of live-action film.

Adopting the methods of this American animation may thus have allowed Heartfield to accomplish several goals at once. They could provide "something completely new for the German film industry" while also satisfying Kessler's overlords with a

German alternative to popular American film. Most significantly, however, war-themed shorts realized with animation could offer foreign and domestic audiences the conflict's violent spectacle without the messy footage that German authorities steadfastly refused to allow. It was for the subversive potential of such troubling spectacles, I suggest, that Heartfield turned to animation as an alternative to live-action film.

WAR AND CINEMA

Like most urban-dwelling Germans of his time, Heartfield was keenly aware of the national cinema's failure to mediate the war to audiences, an underlying propaganda goal of his films. Germany had come famously late to the task of fashioning filmic war coverage and propaganda, setting course in that direction only after the Allies had pummeled its audiences with anti-Teutonic "hate films" and once German morale had sunk precipitously low. At that point, in the summer of 1916, the High Command and the Foreign Office began to set up a central service for visual propaganda, which eventually became the Bild- und Filmamt (Picture and Film Office, or BuFA), on January 30, 1917.[66]

Although BuFA produced a number of documentary war films and set up hundreds of theaters in the field, its products were largely judged boring and ineffective, particularly by the Lichtbild-Gesellschaft (Photograph Society), a private consortium of film financiers unofficially backed by Alfred Hugenberg, the head of Krupp and future chief of the service's privatized successor, Ufa.[67] BuFA's own productions, such as *With Our Heroes on the Somme* and *Our Hindenburg* (both 1917), were indeed disappointments.[68] But the projects it financed outside its direct administration met with greater success; Heartfield's counted among the films produced in this way. By this time in 1917, however, banal newsreels and escalating hardship had left most cinema patrons seeking the more distracting fare of narrative cinema, a phenomenon that Erich Ludendorff, the head of the German High Command, particularly loathed.[69] The challenge of German propaganda, therefore, lay in luring audiences back to the subject of war. Heartfield's animated and sensorial excess promised to accomplish this task by providing a seemingly distracting spectacle that indirectly solicited enthusiasm for the conflict, at least as his overseers hoped. Moreover, shown abroad in neutral countries, his films could showcase German cultural prowess and thereby fulfill Kessler's primary aesthetic-political charge.

With this multivalent strategy in mind, Heartfield surely reflected on the war's first days, when audiences craved an authentic and moving cinema of the conflict. The absence of such films constituted an urgent topic of discussion at the time in the country's two cinema trade journals and, subsequently, among historians of early German cinema. But what some of the historians have overlooked is what Heartfield and the journals of 1914–1915 seem to have targeted, namely the utterly ordinary and even banal visions of war that took nothing from the conflict's perceptual

transformations.[70] For studio heads, theater owners, and audiences, this heavily policed cinematic placidity disappointed heated expectations that Heartfield now sought to meet.

Just one day after the country's call to mobilization, *Der Kinematograph* had heralded the cinema's latent capacity to satisfy not only the public's enhanced appetite for rousing news and entertainment but also its new sensorial cravings. In "War and Cinema," the editors reported that "the general unrest that has seized the public with uncertainty about coming events finds its interim expression in a much higher rate of cinema visits. At least in Berlin, the public anticipates definitive news with impatience." As viewers awaited conclusive updates in the form of moving pictures, they also sought forms of stimulation that could approximate the experience of Germany's suddenly rattled cities. "Until late in the night hours the streets are thickly populated. And for many, the movie theaters that operate late provide a highly welcomed opportunity to pass a couple of hours being calmed by filmed pictures of anxiety, unrest and excitement."[71] Readers today might find this suggested link between cinematic repose and anxious pictures odd, particularly considering the horrific stalemate that the war quickly reached. But *Der Kinematograph* suggested that this jumbled cast of sensations itself conveyed the reality of early wartime emotion in a laudatory and even reassuring manner:

> The colorful shift of images on the screen, the transition from seriousness to cheerfulness, from instructional to conversational, from landscape images to military scenes, all accommodate the mood of the human psyche like scarcely any other performance. In these days that are heavy with unease, when one sensational news report chases away another: here hope, there the triggering of heightened unease . . ., the apparently indiscriminate and chance succession of film images are a correct reproduction of human feeling. Much as the topic of conversation in these fevered days jumps from the important to the unimportant, and much as the topic of these conversations expresses the uncertainty and vagueness of the situation, so the cranking cameraman spins the film industry's phenomena in a motley fashion past the cinema's spectator.[72]

These lines indicate that at least some commentators who experienced the soon-to-be-mythologized "spirit of 1914" sought to associate the moment's heady sensations with the cinematic effects that had peppered the early film of attractions. And this swirl of filmic phenomena, by combining the cinema's formal possibilities with gripping war coverage, seemed to suit the flickering perceptual chaos of early wartime Europe. In this sense, *Der Kinematograph*'s editor partially confirms Paul Virilio's suggestion that the "logistics of military perception" ultimately transformed the effects of cinema, the difference being that generalized wartime excitement alone might have initiated this rapid evolution of earlier effects.[73]

A month later, in fact, *Der Kinematograph*'s editors straightforwardly advocated a relationship that would enable the commercial cinema to benefit from the military's perceptual logistics. The cinema apparatus, this editorial maintained, could be

placed at the service of the military to great effect: "Like all achievements of modern technology that have won a place in the line of military aids: the telephone, the radio telegram, the bicycle, the automobile, the airplane, etc., so has the Cinematograph quickly become useful for the commander's prosecution of war." Intentionally blurring the distinction between public cinema and military technologies, the article reminded its readers, some of whom were presumably military staff, that "ballistic cinematography offered the military's Materials Testing Commission an unsurpassed means of help when it captured the individual phases and effect of a bullet's fire down to the most fleeting detail." In turn, "airplane cinematography" captured masses of enemy troops in "immeasurable detail."[74] Of course, the magazine was basically asking for such footage to be supplied to civilian cinemas, where it could enliven coverage, just as its previous editorial had breathlessly anticipated.

Despite this expressed enthusiasm, *Der Kinematograph*'s cinema of swirling sensation never came to pass. For one thing, gathering the sort of battle footage that might feed this desire for an "indiscriminate and chance succession" of images proved extremely difficult. The General Command, for example, rarely allowed camera crews into battle zones, a problem that Hans Barkhausen has painstakingly chronicled. The military provided numerous excuses for this banishment, but essentially it felt no obligation to provide information to the larger public on whose behalf it was supposedly waging this war. During the conflict's first successful months, the martial authorities simply disregarded the public's clamor for filmic proof of Germany's "heroic victories." The General Command and its directing High Command did eventually allow news services limited access on October 6, 1914, releasing its "Procedures for Permission to Picture the Front."[75] But remaining restrictions and local censorship—often exercised arbitrarily—ensured that any war-related footage arrived in cinemas long after its newsworthiness expired. This was true even for the newsreels directed by film pioneer Oskar Messter, the intended beneficiary of this October concession.[76] On December 16, *Der Kinematograph* complained that excessive precautions were squelching the creativity that might animate war coverage. Film studios, for example, had shelved many reportage projects largely because they could not obtain guarantees from censors that new ideas would pass muster:

> Based on their experience so far, it is no exaggeration to say that of the hundreds of war film ideas that studios have laboriously picked up, only one finds the censor's approval. The man who understands how to write a good film idea that the censor will approve and that will not put the audience to sleep, he will become a rich man.[77]

On July 29, 1916, Hermann Schuhmacher, director of the Central Division of the Foreign Office, complained to the assembled leaders of the General Command that the public was indeed becoming bored with military films and had even begun to reject such footage as shallow propaganda.[78]

Already in early 1915 audiences that had first craved visual proof of the country's early victories tired of the static fare they were offered. As the editors of the country's

other major cinema trade journal, *Licht-Bild-Bühne* (*Picture Theater*), wrote on March 20, "Today . . . the weekly war newsreel is nearly received as a tiresome break in the program, for it is the peak of harmlessness and has nothing to do with the war."[79] The commentary noted that in the present, straitjacketed cinematic conditions a telling disconnection had arisen: "The battles are fought in the intertitles, but not in the picture." For example, "we read with excitement about 'the advance against W.,' and we see marching soldiers. But not once do we see in the background the foretold glimmer of Fort W. that the title promised." Or the audience was told, "'In this house the enemy barricaded himself,' and we see a house." "If the war continues to develop this way in film," the writer warned, "then what happens next week will be: 'a soldier's helmet left lying . . ., a weapon being cleaned, a telephone wire through which at just this moment an important message runs.'"

In short, the commentator complained, "We sense [*spüren*] nothing, purely nothing of the violent besieging of our people in these newsreels." The cinema's banal and static visual limitations had produced a sensorial poverty utterly at odds with the experience of the war. The author quite nearly declared that this vast failure impugned the very photographic basis of cinema: "Who is satisfied with this war footage? The public is not and we have not been for a long time. To the contrary, we even say there is no longer any war footage. The end that we anticipated is here."[80] Moving images documenting the war undeniably existed, but according to this commentary, their incommensurability with the conflict negated their validity. Live-action cinema, then, had become one of the war's many casualties. Heartfield, I would argue, may have agreed with this assessment. The sensorial surplus in his animation and puppetry stood to return an authentic sense of the war's violence to film by sidestepping live action altogether, avoiding the photographic basis that had been discredited by its flaccidity in the face of war.

Significantly, film cameramen who gained access to the front lines in this early period confirmed live action's perceptual demise. Usable footage that approximated their experience of the conflict was, they reported, nearly impossible to obtain. As one such cameraman, Martin Kopp, explained in *Der Kinematograph*, "It is particularly hard to get scenes from the trenches on film, because the construction of these pits provides the camera with scarcely a view. It is even harder to film fight scenes directly because the camera operator obviously learns nothing of the planned attack."[81] Even when one could capture footage, it looked nothing like the images movie audiences expected. An Austrian cameraman reported in the *Wiener Abendzeitung* (*Vienna Evening Magazine*) that the front lines, with their modern fighting techniques, resembled "no colossal battle painting."[82] Bernd Hüppauf describes this disconnection between audience expectations and the new reality of war as an outright crisis of representation. As he explains, "Representations of modern warfare in film and photography are faced with a structural dilemma: their moral commitment is linked more often than not to a visual code which clashes with the requirements of visualizing a highly abstract modern reality."[83] He attributes this moral commitment to the implicit demand that directors humanize "the destructive

technological violence of modern warfare," a task normally realized in juxtaposed images of combat and the human face. But such an exchange assumed existing standards of cinematic practice that now proved incompatible with Europe's newly splintered form—and experience—of mechanized war.

Representative moviemakers and theater owners, by contrast, attributed this crisis less to cinema's formal resistance to the fragmented violence of modern war than to the refusal of military and governing authorities to make this violence available to audiences. As explained above, military authorities initially threw up roadblocks to the taking of war footage, and local censors continued to exercise excessive—if not also arbitrary—caution in determining what images and reporting could surface from combat zones. One recurring excuse for this embargo was that German audiences, particularly spectators who had lost loved ones, were simply too sensitive to see honest war footage. But as *Der Kinematograph*'s Horst Emscher contested in an opinion piece, "No one demands that the cinema industry harm the holy sensitivities of people left behind by the fallen. But in the end, one should not strike down all reasonable considerations." Concerned about the consequences of not satisfying audiences' desires for jolting war footage, Emscher urged that the censors not allow the entire film industry to fail just to protect someone with an "abnormal psychiatric condition. . . . Anyone who suffered such a heavy loss that his emotions are ruled by an above average and extraordinary sensitivity will generally possess no overwhelming inclination to visit the cinema."[84] The military authorities and censors, however, worried that even mildly traumatized civilians could lose their enthusiasm for the war if exposed to shocking footage.

As the war ground on and more and more citizens suffered the loss of loved ones or hovered near starvation on the home front, this "abnormal psychiatric condition" famously lost its abnormality. With the 1916 publication of his drawing *Durchhalten* in *Die neue Jugend*, Grosz communicated just this sense of trauma-driven breakdown (fig. 3.6). Grosz's image, of course, mocked the regime's continual injunction to persevere, to withstand the war's hardships, no matter the increasing presence of death and, according to his vision, depravity. That Heartfield wanted Grosz's apparently distressed art for his animated features was therefore not surprising. At this moment of generalized upheaval, Grosz's work was not intended for the light of heart.

If citizens suffered "holy sensitivities" that might be excited by unvarnished war footage or, by extension, a dousing with George Grosz's animated "cold shower," then soldiers nursed outright trauma that an uncontrolled cinema could mercilessly torment. Ernst Jünger described this shell-shocked condition as a state of "auditory hallucinations" that "blunted [his comrades'] enthusiasm for war." In his *In Stahlgewittern* (*Storm of Steel*), he explained that this condition "was to accompany us all through the war, the habit of jumping at any sudden and unexpected noise. Whether it was a train clattering past, a book falling to the floor, or a shout in the night—on each occasion, the heart would stop with a sense of mortal dread."[85]

Grosz and Heartfield's swirling cinema of sensation and attractions, specifically modeled on an American animation that encoded audible stimuli in graphic marks

and rubbery contortions, could provoke this sensitivity to great subversive effect. Even its hectic visual pace, marked by such novelties as skyscrapers sprouting from French soil, could be jarring. As Jünger noted more generally, any break from the expected could stimulate his shell-shocked comrades' dread. Such "experience hit so hard in that dark country beyond consciousness, that every time there was a break with the usual, the porter Death would leap to the gates with hand upraised."[86]

This cinema of perceptual chaos might suit the true conditions of wartime Germany and impress foreign cinephiles with the country's cultural progress. But its appeal to frayed nerves—indeed, its use of shock to achieve wartime relevance—could also blunt martial enthusiasm, as Jünger suggested and, I submit, as Heartfield intended. That local authorities actually worried about the relation between cinematic shock and blunted war fervor finds its greatest confirmation in one fascinating decision: Berlin's wartime film censor banned only one Mutt and Jeff feature during the conflict's entire course, *Die Bombe in der Handtasche* (*The Bomb in the Handbag*).[87]

THE SUBVERSIVE POWER OF SHOCK ANIMATION

As a young director, Heartfield faced a cinematic status quo in which newsreels from the front struck audiences as implausible or downright boring and dramas measured their success by how well they distracted audiences from the newsreels' subject. The appeal of filmic representation, in other words, was diminished by claims of documentary status. But animation's "ability to resist notions of the real world," as Paul Wells has written, allowed Heartfield to infuse wartime's punishing reality into a reduced "narrative space and visual environment radically different to the live-action version of the world." Therefore, although the cartoon world "connotes escapism and unambiguous visual pleasure," Heartfield's films would have turned this expectation on its head, replacing pleasure with somatic terror.[88]

By combining unsettling subject matter and sensorial excess, Heartfield's films, had they been released, might have far surpassed the impact of the animated features Germany had previously commissioned or permitted others to produce in support of its propaganda efforts. These included *Teddys Raid* (1917), a short, hand-drawn film by Oskar Messter that mocked the American president's declaration of war, and *Im Reich des Geldes* (*In the Empire of Money*, 1917), a war-bonds promotion showing the hand of pioneer animator Julius Pinschewer composing a propaganda drawing. *Teddys Raid* is now lost, but we may infer something of its content from the fact that most of Messter's 1918 newsreels ended with similar caricatures drawn by the animation artist Jack Winter. Presumably, these short segments sought to enliven otherwise banal footage, thereby establishing a relation between live-action news and animated fantasy from which Heartfield's films would have benefited. Pinschewer's conceit, of course, strongly recalls Heartfield's possibly completed *Drawing Hand*, although, as Jeanpaul Goergen has suggested, "grotesque caricatures like those George Grosz proposed [for this feature] would have been a first in Ger-

man film."[89] Although Heartfield's films might have used animation to forge a more appealing and viable cinema, they also used a more aggressive technique and more shocking subject matter to what could have been a fabulously subversive effect.

Heartfield thus avoided the photographic basis of film in his animated shorts because, aside from promoting Grosz's talent, he wished to bypass the viewing conditions that cold and static war footage had cultivated. In the country's cinemas, moving imprints of the war actually encouraged emotional distance from a brutal event. Audiences far from the front not only failed to perceive the war's corporeal horror but were placated, and ultimately bored, as they viewed this inadequate and ameliorative war footage. Perhaps with this precedent in mind, Heartfield later expressed a surprising ambivalence about photography overall, lamenting that its rationalized rhetoric of veracity and testimony could mislead just as readily as it could unveil. "You can lie to people with photos, really lie to them," he continually admonished.[90] And he consistently cited the experience of the Great War's mass representation as the root of this insight. He was recalling, that is, the first mass deployment of photography and cinema as part of a complicated propaganda apparatus, the product of which was a banal and whitewashed image of an unprecedented cataclysm.

By avoiding the photographic, Heartfield's menacing or slapstick animation, complete with its "subtly embedded political messages," made a spectacular appeal to the primal senses of shell-shocked soldiers and despondent civilians. These would be audiences traumatized by wartime conditions but also anesthetized by a photo- and live-action-based visuality that trained them to deny their actual roiling feelings. As noted in chapter 2, Erich Maria Remarque wrote plaintively of this perceptual disjunction between the optical and the somatic in *All Quiet on the Western Front*. His novel suggests not only that Germany's civilian population was woefully underinformed as to the conflict's horrific extremes, but that citizens simply invented a picture to augment the official one, which they instinctively knew was incomplete. Heartfield's war-themed films, intended for domestic and foreign distribution, sought to inject bodily terror back into this process of invention, forcing audiences to come to terms with the traumatizing reality they had been taught to suppress. Perhaps Heartfield's somatic attack could even have forced audiences to recognize the inability of existing signifying practices to communicate the war's extremes or, more essentially, to place their own post-traumatic conditions into language. It was the impossibility of this challenge that Berlin's Dada movement ultimately sought to foreground and provoke from its very first performance in 1918.

FROM DADA PERFORMANCE TO DADA PHOTOMONTAGE

Despite Dada's early emphasis on performance, and Heartfield and Grosz's choice of animation over live-action film, the men had not abandoned photography. They had, after all, incorporated photographic imagery into the subversive postcards they

sent to the front, rearranging the terms of German war propaganda so as to instruct the missives' recipients in how to disassemble and satirize photographic constructions of "hurrah kitsch." But the messages conveyed by this private correspondence could only be put into words with great care when appearing in *Die neue Jugend*, and they could never earn approval for mass distribution as photographic images. The restrictions on straightforwardly dissident language and public visual culture were nearly inescapable by 1918. Only after the war, with the revolution that followed, did these Wilhelmine controls melt away. In this postwar cauldron of urban conflict, the men found their way back to photography, bringing to the medium not just the lessons they had learned about satirical subversion but also the inventions they had concocted in the laboratory of crashing animation *and* the theater of near-violent Dada performance. They would now revitalize photography with the powerful sensorial effects they had cultivated in these other media. The result was a dramatic amplification of the disjunctive compositional formula they had earlier learned from avant-garde movements such as cubism and futurism.

Once we consider that Heartfield and Grosz's film projects took features such as *Mutt and Jeff* as a model, the iconographic similarities between American-style character animation and the men's subsequent Dada photomontage becomes unmistakable. In Heartfield's *Das Pneuma umreist die Welt* (*The Tire Travels the World*, 1920; fig. 4.14), for example, slogans spew from the mouth of a figure on the right while the tire, crashing through a barricade of display type and advertising illustrations, seems to provoke a violent scream from a monocled Raoul Hausmann's disembodied head. *Dada-Merika* (1919), collaboratively *motiert* ("assembled") by Heartfield and Grosz, sports a similarly screaming Asian figure, a flying pressure gauge releasing smoke that suggests imminent explosion, and darting hieratic marks in the form of measuring tape and punctured leather strips. Such multisensory solicitations, forged from the real materials of everyday life as well as from photography, directly reflect, I suggest, the lessons that Heartfield, Grosz, and Herzfelde took away from their moviemaking experience.

The men's famous tribute to the German émigré film magnate Carl Laemmle, composed from Grosz's drawing and Heartfield's photomontage, openly declares this relationship between the cinema and photomontage. Titled *Leben und Treiben in Universal-City, 12 Uhr 5 mittags* (*Hustle and Bustle in the Universal City, Five past Noon*, 1920; fig. 4.15), it recalls pioneer German filmmaker Max Skladanosky's 1896 *Leben und Treiben am Alexanderplatz* while also referencing Laemmle's new studio in Los Angeles's San Fernando Valley. The image's swirling and darting forms—comprising photo fragments, film stills, filmstrips, text, and drawn content—laud the mogul's cinematic dramas by activating and animating each other in hectic juxtaposition. But in this work, as in others, the men also evoked the explosions and crashes of early Weimar's shattered conditions.

Heartfield's later work employed much the same sensorial excess, using the semiconcealed traces of its creation to imply noise, pain, and even screams—as the monteur's scissors, for example, sever the head of Berlin's police commissioner,



Fig. 4.14
John Heartfield, *Das Pneuma umreist die Welt* (*The Tire Travels the World*), on the cover of *Der Dada*, no. 3, 1920. Galerie Bassenge, Berlin.
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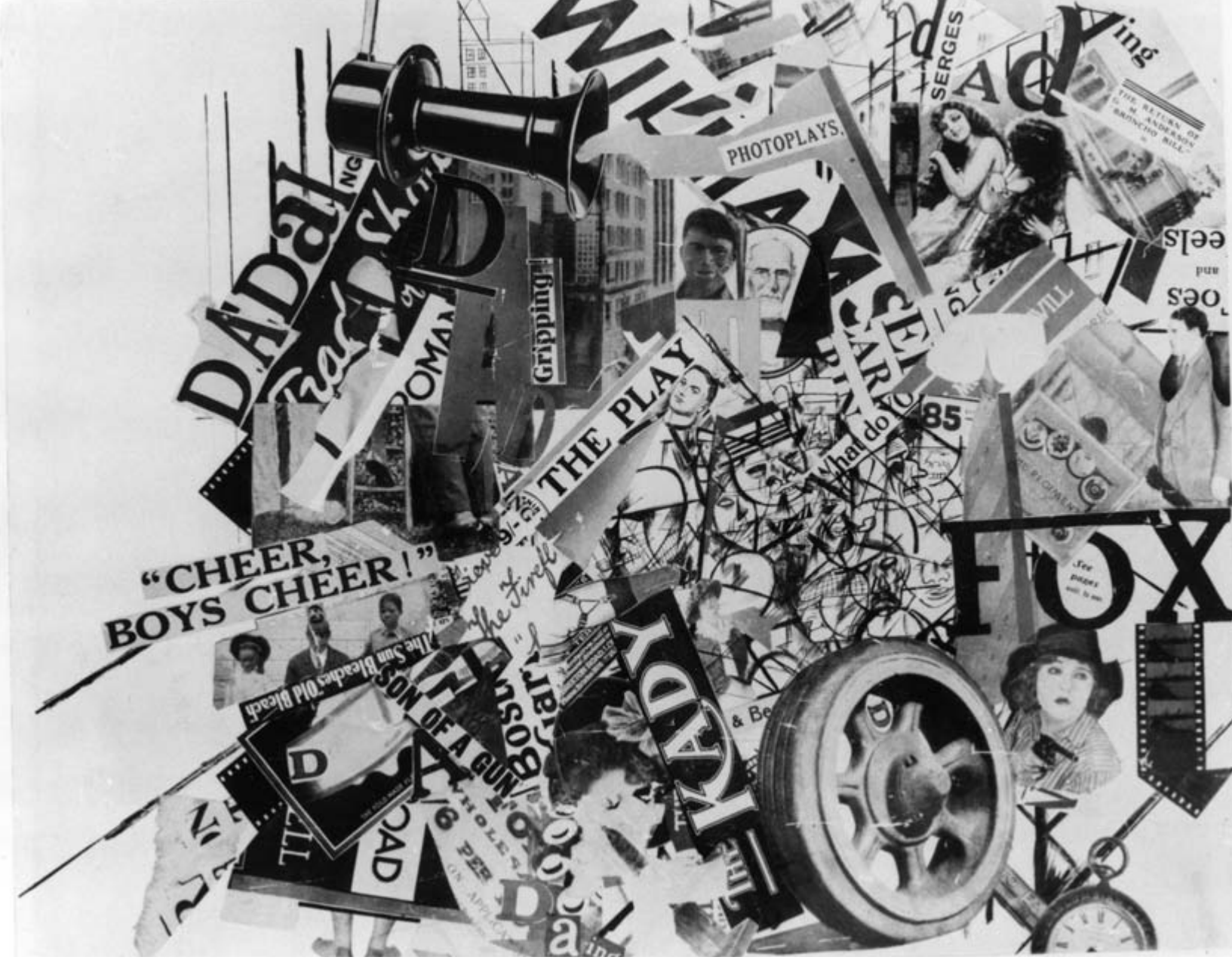


Fig. 4.15
John Heartfield (with underdrawing by George Grosz), *Leben und Treiben in Universal-City, 12 Uhr 5 mittags* (*Hustle and Bustle in the Universal City, Five Past Noon*), 1920. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Karl Zörgiebel, from its body (1929; fig. I.4). In a 1933 image, a petulant Hermann Göring spews ineffectual, cursive curses at a towering Georgi Dimitrov, a defendant in the Reichstag fire trial who served as his own attorney and memorably cross-examined Göring (fig. 4.16). In a Communist Party electoral poster from 1928, the sense Heartfield solicits is tactile rather than aural: one can feel the tensed hand of the proletarian as its lengthened fingers and crooked thumb reach out to clasp its enemy (fig. 4.17). The shock that Heartfield conveyed in his Dada montage continued in these later works, striking audiences with the unsettling reality of interwar Germany's political and material conditions. Yet these sensorial provocations originated not just in Dada's sensory-rich realism but also in the animated and puppet-based films Heartfield produced for Kessler's office.



Fig. 4.16
John Heartfield, *Der Richter und der Gerichtete* (*The Judge and the Judged*), *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* 12, no. 45 (November 16, 1933): 775. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (87-S194). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

It is worth repeating that Heartfield first turned to animation largely because photography had, during World War I, been reduced to a visual sedative. Its passivity before the traumatic experience of conflict, its stymied perceptual possibilities amid the radically overlapping time frames and sensations of mechanized combat, all of these failures pushed him toward the sensory possibilities of animation. These cinematic experiments, in turn, landed Heartfield once more on the terrain of avant-garde photomontage, where he now found far more effective ways to reflect modernity's haptic excess. Avant-garde artists such as Heartfield may have embraced photography for its infinite reproducibility and its referential power, features that they famously wielded against traditional art. But could photomontage, "New Vision" photography, and the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) have also been strategies devised by Germany's young artists to salvage, reclaim, and reinvent a medium whose perceptual validity had been deeply impugned by its wide use in war propaganda?

FILM, PHOTOMONTAGE, AND THE AVANT-GARDE

In his landmark 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," Walter Benjamin famously made the following observation on the relation between avant-garde art and film:

> It has always been one of the primary tasks of art to create a demand whose hour of full satisfaction has not yet come. The history of every art form has critical periods in which the particular form strains after effects which can be easily achieved only with a changed technical standard—that is to say, in a new art form.[91]



Fig. 4.17
John Heartfield, *5 Finger hat die Hand* (*5 Fingers Has the Hand*), 1928. The remainder of the text reads, "With 5 you seize the enemy! Vote list 5, Communist Party!" From the portfolio *John Heartfield, 33 Fotomontagen* (Dresden: VEB Verlag der Kunst, 1976 [first edition, 1974]). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (1381-988). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

To demonstrate this developmental dialogue between art forms and technology, Benjamin asserted that "Dadaism attempted to produce with the means of painting (or literature) the effects that the public today seeks in film."[92] The general outlines of this observation have since become intimately familiar to historians of interwar art. But Benjamin's tantalizingly limited reference to Dada's new art forms begs for greater specificity: Just what effects was the public seeking in film, and how did these properties link the cutting edge of art with the new technologies of motion pictures?

Benjamin's larger point, of course, lies in ideas and practices that he observed in Soviet "operative" art and that he more specifically gathered from its most famous practitioner, the polymath Sergei Tret'iakov.[93] Taking stock of this precedent, Benjamin hoped that a medium such as film, characterized by endless reproducibility, might become available to masses of people as producers, subjects, and audiences. With the unique work of art and its celebrity artists now things of the past, film could focus on reconfiguring modern perception rather than recycling the conventional themes of mystery, romance, personal aggrandizement, or straightforward indulgence, all products of a traditionally trained creativity.

But in these brief passages, Benjamin said something else as well. The Dadaists, he maintained, appealed not just to optical but also to aural and tactile perception. "Their poems," he explained, "are 'word salad' containing obscene expressions and every imaginable kind of linguistic refuse. The same is true of their paintings on which they mounted buttons or train tickets."[94] Along with photomontages similarly assembled from clippings and leavings of Weimar's popular culture, these works challenged aesthetic norms. "One requirement was paramount," he explained, "to outrage the public" through a scandalous "distraction" in order to forestall "contemplative immersion . . ., a breeding ground for asocial behavior." The Dadaists, that is, "turned the artwork into a missile. It jolted the viewer, taking on a tactile quality."[95] Thus, Dada artworks "fostered the demand for film, since the distracting element in film is also primarily tactical, being based on successive changes of scene and focus which have a percussive effect on the viewer."[96] In other words, the effects the public had earlier experienced in avant-garde art and now sought in film were viscerally shocking and, therefore, capable of forcing their way past cerebral contemplation and toward a primal, even bodily, reorientation of perception. As Benjamin saw it, Dadaism kept this physical shock effect "wrapped . . . inside the moral shock effect" of its scandalous distractions, whereas film freed shock "from this wrapping."[97]

Could it be, however, that Benjamin partly misread the complexity of this progression by inverting its order, specifying that film follows art? As we have seen, wartime work in animated film taught Heartfield and Grosz how to incorporate the extra-optical element of embodied perception into a form that Hausmann later called the "static film" of photomontage.[98] Intriguingly, Benjamin may have actually made room for this inverted unfolding in his "Work of Art" essay when, before

turning to Dada, he lauded none other than Mickey Mouse. Cinematic animation, as he suggested at this earlier point in his essay, represented the apotheosis of film's capacity to train collective perception beyond "the *normal* spectrum of sense perceptions." And it did so, not by directly unveiling the overlap between technology and violence, as Heartfield's work sought to do, but by satirizing this imbrication.[99] As Benjamin wrote elsewhere, the barbaric and alternative existence proffered by Mickey Mouse "is full of miracles that not only surpass those of technology but make fun of them."[100] In such cases, animation is a humorous and collective "psychic immunization" against the "dangerous tensions which technology and its consequences have engendered in the masses at large," particularly during World War I.[101]

In his films, however, Heartfield sought no such immunization, precisely because the technology of warfare had *not* engendered such tensions in the great masses of noncombatants. But remarkably, the young director's true intent is well expressed in a highly ambivalent footnote in which Benjamin acknowledged "the cozy acceptance of bestiality and violence as inevitable concomitants of existence" in much of Disney's animation. Could this inevitability also have been the wartime message of Heartfield's shocking animated films? Benjamin warned that the presumption of inevitable violence in animated films renewed an old tradition "inaugurated by the dancing hooligans to be found in depictions of medieval pogroms, of whom the 'riff-raff' in Grimm's fairy tale of that title are a pale, indistinct rear-guard."[102] With this admonishment in mind, can we conclude that Heartfield's proposals to animate a political Struwwelpeter, the violent Brothers Grimm fairy tales, and Poe's *Red Death* all aimed to menace and shock with the same reinaugurated violence? Did the brutality of war, heavily suppressed in representation, create a need to unleash the physical shock effect of film before introducing the moral shock of Dada's art?

I propose that the answer to these questions is yes. In Heartfield's case, animated film presented an economy of multisensory shock that the artist deployed later as Germany's leading producer of highly politicized avant-garde photomontage, an engagement that lasted through 1938. At a moment in high modernity when photographic representation threatened to replace the direct experience of reality, he drew on his knowledge of animated film to infuse visceral tumult into otherwise static images. Surgical attacks upon photographic images thereby generated physical blows, shots even, against Germany's political bodies and the body politic. The trauma that photography had increasingly obscured, from the violence of Weimar's fractional politics to the unprecedented abuses of Nazi tyranny, metamorphosed into the bodily shock of Heartfield's near-filmic photomontage.

REVOLUTION AND DISTRACTION

The moment at which Heartfield would transform his multisensory animation back into photomontage was soon at hand. His films, as this chapter suggests, would have

smuggled the deeply somatic trauma of war into the seemingly distracting fare of eye-popping animation. But soon no prospect of cinematic diversion could provide shelter from the actual gathering storm of events outside. In November 1918 the German Revolution broke out and quickly crashed into the lives of everyday urban dwellers, even those firmly planted in their movie theater seats.

Polish film star Pola Negri remembered precisely when this shattering of Germany's grand illusion took place, and it happened to be during a film screening. She had arrived in Berlin from Warsaw in 1917 to star in a play being directed by the theater impresario Max Reinhardt. Work was plentiful, but food, she recalled, was hard to find. Given this strain, the audience for light entertainment was large, particularly when it came to the films she made with director Ernst Lubitsch. The "intensely romantic Oriental fatalism" of these films, she later wrote, "was precisely the kind of escapism a war-weary people craved." Upon completion of her second Lubitsch feature, *Carmen*, Negri prepared for a gala Ufa screening. It was the evening of November 8, 1918.

"I was having a new gown made for the showing," she recalled, "and the studio was getting the provisions for a champagne reception before the film." Meanwhile, however, a full-on revolution was set to reach Berlin. "None of us paid very much attention to the cataclysmic events that were taking place everywhere," she explained:

> When you are living on the brink of the abyss you soon cease to see it, and when the newspapers are shouting daily of disaster, you soon cease to listen. No matter how painful life is, you automatically go on living it until the moment of death. What we did not realize was that Germany's death was at hand.[103]

The country's expiration would pierce her sumptuous cocoon that very evening, threatening to interrupt the distracting flicker of filmic festivity:

> That evening, my lamé gown was a shimmering triumph. The champagne was chilled to absolute perfection and loosened tongues to laughter and bantering gossip. The studio orchestra played selections from *Carmen* to get us in the mood for the picture. Conversations flowed as freely and effervescently as the wine. Even the dark gloom of the bankers who put up the money for Ufa was cancelled by the sparkling quality of the gathering. We sat down in the projection room, and the film began. There was applause at my first appearance. Over it and lingering for just a moment after, I heard a faint sound in the distance. It was like—but it couldn't be—gunfire. I looked around to see if others had noticed it, but there was nothing but an intense concentration on the film broken only by additional applause for certain cinematic effects. . . . Minutes later, there was a repetition of the sound. This time, it was not muted by the clapping hands. I leaned over to Lubitsch and whispered, "Ernst, did you hear—" His reply was quick and terse. "Yes, shh! There's nothing anybody can do. Watch the picture."[104]

Caught between an encroaching reality and her fellow viewers' focus on "certain cinematic effects," Negri increasingly sensed which of the two would triumph:

> The distant gunfire began to come closer and steadily underscored the film. Everybody in the audience must have been aware of it, but they remained riveted to the screen and did not betray this knowledge by so much as a turn of the head. I crouched back in my chair horrified by our complacence, by the fact that we all knew and preferred to pretend nothing was happening. It was so much easier to put on a blindfold than to ask the forbidden question.[105]

Once the film concluded, Negri had to navigate her return home through barrages of gunfire that had migrated from the front—and from Berlin Dada's first performance—to the street.

Heartfield's work just after the German Revolution furiously sought to mirror this urban upheaval, to tear away the blindfold that Negri's companions refused to remove. Within this new postwar context, however, he faced radically different conditions. Wartime censorship had fallen, and an unprecedented reality filled the streets of Germany's greatest cities. Real fighting now pressed upon the everyday citizen's consciousness in ways that conflict on distant fronts had not. Great swaths of Germany's urban population now heard the same ever-louder gunfire that had pierced Negri's narrative distraction. In this new context, Heartfield returned to photography. Yet he did so not for what the medium showed, but what it overlooked.

5

A SPECTACULAR REFLECTION

Heartfield's Return to Photomontage and Berlin's Postwar Dada Movement

1918–1920

SOME TIME AROUND NEW YEAR'S DAY 1919, AMERICAN JOURNALIST AND FUTURE Hollywood screenwriter Ben Hecht arrived in Berlin to find himself one of the few foreign correspondents ready to report from Germany's defeated, rebellious, and broken capital.[1] By the time he returned to the *Chicago Daily News*, roughly six months later, he had not only interviewed the moment's most important political figures, but had also befriended the central cast of Berlin's Dada movement, including John Heartfield and George Grosz.[2] Hecht even attended as a "guest of honor" at least one of the group's notorious performance evenings, where he witnessed an absurdist race between a sewing machine and a typewriter.[3] Thus it was with a sharp acumen gained by an outsider's perspective, a journalist's sharp inquisitiveness, and a Dada-like "delight for the preposterous," as he described his own relish, that Hecht later provided a stunning diagnosis of Germany's early postwar ills. The country, he declared, was experiencing a "nervous breakdown."[4]

Hecht's account supporting this judgment was lurid. As he recalled in his 1954 memoir, Germany had broken into a revolution characterized by violent urban clashes, schizophrenic political thinking, and libertine abandon. In the center of the capital, bands of radicalized citizens, mostly workers and former servicemen, battled irregular right-wing troops who had been retained by the country's provisional government. Meanwhile, the old regime's power, along with its strict social control, seemed to melt away, leaving an opaque puddle of social schizophrenia. In this frothing cauldron, right-wing combat pilots advocated the old militarist order by day while by night, "perfumed and monocled," they led polyamorous, drug-fueled orgies. Similarly, an agent from Moscow secretly advised Germany's

unfolding revolution—and in his spare time sexually assaulted captives held in his grand Kurfürstendamm apartment. According to Hecht's surely sensationalized but representative recollection, postwar Germany had lost its traditional social boundaries to such an extent that practices of desire and politics each seemed a complicated and potentially paradoxical expression of primal urges. Most astonishing for the American journalist, however, was how this paradox expressed itself on the street. In the capital's public spaces, city residents of all stripes fell into compulsive proclamation-making, a phenomenon Hecht described as a percussive gushing of *Standpunkte*, or points of view. These quick expressions, he explained:

> bombinated around me like strings of firecrackers. . . . Every day that dawned was like a presidential pre-election eve at home. Nobody seemed to have any personal business or personal thoughts. All was politics, revolution, antirevolution and cocaine addicts, the streetwalkers in Friedrichstrasse, the sadists in the Kurfürstendamm mansions, the battered droshky drivers, the beggars in Alexanderplatz—all I met had at me with *Standpunkts* [*sic*]. I wrote to [*Daily News* editor Henry Justin] Smith, "Germany is having a nervous breakdown. There is nothing sane to report."[5]

What these reflections of percussive mental breakdown suggest is that the entire country had fallen into a grand Saint Vitus's dance, a vast expansion of the madness suffered by Berlin Dada's first audience on April 12, 1918. The disorienting yet enlightening jolt that the group's performance and Heartfield's films had sought to administer had now, it seems, been dispensed on a massive scale by the sudden revolution of late 1918–early 1919. At this moment, with outright insurrection having brought about the flailing nervous gyrations he had sought to provoke all along, how would Heartfield respond?

True to form, the politically radicalized Berlin Dadaist gave the startling report that Hecht, the professional journalist, found it impossible to provide. The consciously impulsive advertising artist who, as Elias Canetti noted, "had to shake new things furiously in order to hold them without enfeebling them," grabbed a pair of scissors and prepared to cut.[6] Armed with his weapon of choice, Heartfield reached for any mass-reproduced image or text whose evisceration and reordering could duplicate the din of nervous breakdown that Hecht would compare to strings of "bombinating" firecrackers. He then sliced through these visions and texts with a vigor matching the upheaval's own. The resulting compositions, such as the then twice-published *Das Pneuma umreist die Welt* (fig. 4.14), offered not just a seismographic record of the quaking revolutionary moment but, through their snipping, they called for more such rupture.[7] In this montage, the photographic reproduction of a "Republic" automotive tire has seemingly crashed against periodicals and posters flashing advertisements and the world's news. The resulting spread of splayed detritus echoes the verbal whirl and temporal overlaps that Hecht experienced in Berlin's frothy streets. The psychological impact of this collision is underlined by fellow Dadaist Raoul Hausmann, who, as perhaps in one of Heartfield's films, screams

with mouth ajar. Compositions like this one offered, according to Hausmann, "a mirror image" of the moment "wrenched from the chaos of war and revolution."[8]

Significantly, works such as *The Tire* marked a return to the medium that Heartfield and his good friend Grosz had abandoned when they turned to filmic animation in late 1917. But why would Heartfield take up photography after having perceived it and its live-action equivalent in film as ameliorative, anaesthetizing, and outright misleading? With this query at its core, this chapter seeks to account for Heartfield's return to photography and—in so doing—to explore the larger significance of the revolution and Dada to his development as a lifelong photomonteur. It suggests that shortly after Germany's revolution began, he and Grosz recognized that masses of rebellious servicemen and workers had achieved what they had been trying to provoke all along: a great upheaval. The impact on Heartfield was profound. As he would explain to a fellow London refugee in 1944, he immediately came to realize that "the masses were our confederates—they had achieved what we had only been able to strive for and what we had not accomplished despite [our] frantic efforts."[9]

With the revolution's prosecutors in mind, he and Grosz quickly resolved to forge a new "art propaganda made in the service of the worker's movement."[10] The two friends, along with Wieland Herzfelde, correspondingly joined the young German Communist Party, which they saw as the natural representative of the rebellious masses, and sought to devise for it a clear and combative visual culture. It was in the fashioning of this culture that photography, in the form of photomontage, once again entered Heartfield and Grosz's practice, this time as a highly legible picture type. The men tamed their radical aesthetic forms and adopted the sometimes overdetermined clarity of their politically radical allies. The result was a lucid satirical form of photomontage oriented toward didactic focus rather than full sensorial assault.

But this simplified form of montage did not last long. The failure of Germany's revolution deeply embittered Heartfield and Grosz, leading them to forge a shockingly exploded form of photomontage that refused clarity and instead seemed to reflect the lost revolution's confused and harried apex. Under the combined rubrics of communism and Dada, they hoped to provoke a new revolution by displaying the epoch's unmediated imprint, its direct reflection. As Heartfield's brother Wieland explained at the time, these new pictures would "proceed from the requirement to further the disfiguration of the contemporary world, which already finds itself in a state of disintegration, of metamorphosis."[11] This was the "mirror image . . . wrenched" from the war and revolution that Hausmann later described.

Dada's classic form of photomontage thus arose from the rubric of political propaganda and the logic of the photogram, a photographic image produced without a camera by arranging objects over photosensitive material and then exposing both to light. This process, as old as the medium itself, had already been the subject of experimentation by Christian Schad in Swiss Dada. Berlin Dada's new variance, however, was imprinted not just by luminescence but also by the percussive "explosions" and "crashes" of the moment. This new and expanded sort of photography,

rich in advocacy *and* sensorial shock, promised an emotionally aggressive rather than rationally informative sort of knowledge. It would also, in various forms, become Heartfield's lifelong medium of choice.

SATIRE, CLARITY, AND POLITICAL RADICALIZATION

After the abrupt close of Berlin Dada's first lecture evening, on April 12, 1918, Club Dada only managed to stage a second performance just over a year later, on April 30, 1919. In the intervening twelve months, Heartfield and Grosz had little to do with the movement aside from their films, which by all reports sought to duplicate the aggressive and multisensory assault registered at Dada's 1918 Secession gallery event. Their cinema, as chapter 4 maintains, likely worked as an unofficial but deeply integrated expression of the movement's antiwar fervor. But otherwise, in the year following April 12, Dada as a named institution essentially lay in the hands of the architect Johannes Baader and the German-Czech artist and author Raoul Hausmann. Under the movement's umbrella, these two men initiated a series of well publicized press stunts. Hausmann, who had fashioned himself the group's philosopher or "Dadasoph," recalled in 1921 that he "and Baader alone spent the course of a year without money, without anything else to do, but to supply the press with clever hoaxes which they promptly published."[12]

These notorious bluffs, which the men largely issued as press releases on their newly designed Club Dada letterhead, included, among other things a "Demand for the Nobel Prize" based on Baader's internationalist and peace-oriented "Eight World Sentences," the announcement of Baader's candidacy for the Reichstag, and the postwar declaration of an independent republic in the wealthy Berlin suburb of Nikolassee.[13] The last of these hoaxes, an effort to "found a republic without violence, bloodshed, or weapons, armed with nothing but a typewriter," reportedly resulted in Germany's alarmed government sending troops to defend the high-end garden hamlet at Berlin's edge.[14] Such pranks amounted to public spectacles that kept Dada in the news and extended the critical frothing that had followed its notorious performance evening. The Berlin movement thus continued as a press event, rife with a bluffing and bravado that satirized war reportage and more broadly reflected the late war tumult. What these hoaxes generally lacked, however, was what Heartfield, Grosz, and Wieland Herzfelde increasingly began to crave in their own work: a sharply focused political critique.[15] Their challenge now lay in forging such commentary in a public form no less spectacular than Hausmann and Baader's hoaxes, a task that grew ever more pressing as the war ground to its calamitous end.[16]

In the last months of the conflict, while Baader and Hausmann maintained their rump Dada as a mirthful and critical press event, Heartfield, Herzfelde, and Grosz grew ever more feverishly hostile to the Wilhelmine order. They soon began ma-

neuvering to assert their outrage openly, even in the face of lingering restrictions. Heartfield, of course, remained busy with his film project through the first summer months of 1918. But this engagement ended sometime in August or September when the Foreign Office's News Service apparently judged his propaganda to be unsuitable for the war's new aims. By this time Germany had clearly failed in its last-ditch effort to break through the remaining western front; the newly Bolshevik Russia had earlier withdrawn from the conflict. German authorities, and General Ludendorff in particular, now deemed it necessary to secretly sue for peace with the Allies.[17] As the Foreign Service and the military slowly reconciled themselves to the prospect of a negotiated armistice, correspondence on the film project abruptly stopped with a communiqué dated July 24, 1918, not long after Heartfield finally signed a contract that secured his job with the Foreign Service News Department's cover corporation.[18] Although the novice director later claimed to have continued at the newly founded Ufa, heading its animation department and later its documentary and advertising film department (referred to as the *Kulturfilmabteilung*), Grosz and Herzfelde could no longer rely on this stable source of income to carry them through what ended up being the war's final months.[19] They now had to scrape a living from their other ongoing projects, some of which had languished during Herzfelde's 1917–1918 service near the front in northern France.

Grosz largely got by with grants from his early patron, the remarkably generous war profiteer Solly Falk, and from a contract he signed with Munich art dealer Hans Goltz.[20] Herzfelde, however, took a riskier course. According to his own account, his military career effectively ended in the early summer of 1918 after he abandoned his post near Arras, France. Having gone AWOL, he cautiously returned to Berlin and began scheming Malik's rebirth.[21] His vision for this renaissance produced a fascinating correspondence that reveals the men's rising political assertiveness and its impact on their art.

At the heart of Herzfelde's plan lay a close collaboration with *Die weißen Blätter* (*White Leaves*), a journal with a softly pacifist orientation. He quickly prepared an agreement to this effect and, on July 9, 1918, sent the document to that journal's editor, the Alsatian author and publisher Réne Schickele (then residing in Switzerland, beyond the immediate reach of German censors). In this draft understanding, Herzfelde, on behalf of Malik Press, essentially proposed a merger. Like Wieland, Schickele was an energetic and relatively young intellectual, then in his thirties, who had gathered around him many of the same expressionist writers who had published in *Die neue Jugend*. And like Herzfelde's journal, *Die weißen Blätter* had not appeared since 1917. But the omnipresent Count Kessler now stepped in to help Schickele prepare for a new run. This constituted yet another part of the count's larger cultural mission, in which Heartfield's films played such an important role.[22]

Compared to *Neue Jugend*, however, Herzfelde envisioned Grosz's role in *Die weißen Blätter* to be far more aggressive, far more legible, and ultimately far removed from the expressionist orientation of both journals' literary contributors. Here Herz-

felde proposed, and Kessler remarkably approved, a plan for Grosz to produce a series of caricatures lambasting politicians, "leading men in the field of commerce . . . , [and] disgraceful human institutions," while also addressing the "miserable conditions of the day . . . and their consequences."[23] Grosz himself described his role in a letter to fellow artist Otto Schmalhausen as a "cartoonist" working under a "satirical rubric."[24] Published political commentary was to be the reborn Malik Verlag's pictorial instrument of choice.

Grosz would soon become famous for his powerful satire, which expanded Germany's long tradition of political humor into the realm of mass-produced Communist Party propaganda.[25] His acceptance of Herzfelde's push for clearly legible satire, first realized in a painting made in these same months, was a step in that direction, demonstrating that he was prepared to transform his depictions of generalized social breakdown (fig. 3.7) into far more focused attacks. Given that satire generally "takes as its subject the contrast between reality and an ideal," as Friedrich Schiller famously proposed, Grosz would now have to become more attentive to the legible appearance of both.[26]

Behind Grosz's coming aesthetic reorientation lay an important transformation: he and the Herzfeld brothers were becoming politically radicalized. Already on February 16, 1918, when Wieland took a short leave in Berlin from his military posting in France, he had told Kessler—then in the German capital—of a gathering resentment among enlisted men against the officer's corps. "The ill humor among the ordinary soldiers is certainly high," the young poet explained to the count. "Its cause is exclusively the luxurious life led by officers."[27] According to Kessler's diary, Herzfelde went on to explain that while officers lived on pork and fed their horses sugar, enlisted men foraged for grass to tame their hunger. "All conversation among soldiers centers around food and the 'militarism' under which the officers, their privilege, and their attitude can be generally understood. If there were a revolution, this would be the reason."[28] Although Herzfelde seemed merely to report these sentiments in an objective manner—"as reliable as a gramophone," according to Kessler—he nonetheless registered his growing and clearly articulated hostility toward the type of authority figures Grosz was now supposed to savage pictorially in *Die weißen Blätter*.[29]

Ultimately, the revitalized Swiss-based journal failed to publish any drawings by Grosz.[30] But he began the painting in which he realized this fresh charge a month after Herzfelde concluded the draft agreement with Schickele. Titled *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen* (*Germany, a Winter's Tale*; fig. 5.1), the composition took its name from a critical romantic poem penned by Heinrich Heine, a writer whom many German leftists viewed as a model artist. In it, Grosz skillfully folded his and Heartfield's Dada-oriented interests in multisensory shock under a sharp rubric of political satire. Consequently, compositional strategies of fragmentation and appropriation continued to reflect the moment's underlying chaos, at least as Grosz perceived it. But the cause of this disorder was now attributed to the clearly legible figures in the foreground.



Fig. 5.1
George Grosz, *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen* (*Germany, a Winter's Tale*), 1918. The painting has since been lost. Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, NY. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

Here Grosz partially re-created the frenzy and fragmentation of *The Funeral Procession—Dedicated to Oskar Panizza* (fig. 5.2), which he had finished that summer.[31] In *Funeral*, completed on June 4, 1918, Grosz employed the same futurist faceting that had suggested overlapping and maddening time frames in his drawn work and—most likely—in his and Heartfield's postcards and films. In this earlier painting, the faceting crushes its schematically composed figures into "a big picture of hell" creating "a whiskey alley of grotesque deaths and madmen," as Grosz explained at the time.[32] This conceit not only suggested wartime's underlying insanity but foregrounded the laudable neurosis of Bavarian author Oskar Panizza, known for his blasphemous literature and the time he spent sentenced to prison and mental institutions. Panizza was a model artist for the enraged George Grosz and the neurotic-by-design John Heartfield.

In *Wintermärchen*, the "protest against a mankind gone mad," as Grosz later described the content of *Funeral*, metamorphoses into a far more specific condemnation of what the painter perceived as reactionary social types: the officer, priest, and schoolmaster, to whom the petit bourgeois burgher dressed in soldier's field-gray (seated at table) gives self-satisfied acquiescence. These figures, all clearly identified by characteristic clothing and accessories, anchor the painting while the burgher's world spins behind him toward utter collapse. Moreover, this breakdown seems to



Fig. 5.2
George Grosz, *Der Leichenzug, Widmung an Oskar Panizza* (*The Funeral Procession—Dedicated to Oskar Panizza*), 1917/1918. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

press outward from within the bodies of Grosz's reactionary figures, deforming their countenances and rendering them unsightly caricatures.

After seeing this painting early in the following year, Count Kessler remarked in his diary on Grosz's powerfully focused satire. He wants "to preach, improve, and reform," to become "the German Hogarth." The result, Grosz hoped, "would be hung in schools" to impart lessons to millions of students.[33] The painter, like Heartfield and Herzfelde, had begun to envision himself as a political propagandist, valuing his own art less by traditional aesthetic criteria than for its capacity to mediate powerful social and political messages. Medium rather than expression, in other words, was becoming his primary aesthetic paradigm. As a consequence, Grosz probed the possibility that traditional art media such as painting, which he saw as having lost its critical potential, could offer formally coherent images that were also critical—even upsetting—representations of a repressed contemporary experience. "He loathes painting and the pointlessness of painting as practiced so far," explained Kessler. "Yet by means of it [he] wants to achieve something quite new or, more accurately, something that it used to achieve (through Hogarth or religious art), but which got lost in the nineteenth century." Conceivably, as the painting's title might suggest, this critical-satirical edge had only come to reside in poet Heinrich Heine during those last hundred years. Kessler's conclusion as to what this meant about Grosz was stark: "He is reactionary and revolutionary in one."[34]

Grosz's new painting, as these comments suggest, had become a hybrid of traditional caricature and the avant-garde techniques he and Heartfield had developed during the war. The figures provide a customary and legible presence that dominates the painting. But the world of the dining burgher consists of fragmented and overlapping facets, an assortment of vignettes that lacks the stabilizing benefit of a horizon line or consistent perspective. Grosz even "cut out the time" with various appropriations, montaged onto the canvas as if resting on the burgher's table: an actual front page from the right-wing *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, food ration cards, and other small coupons. Meanwhile, the compositional chaos swirling about this central figure almost requires the viewer to spin the painting around in order to read the components of its conglomeration adequately. In its spiraling and confused assembly, *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen* conveys the consciousness of its figures as a disorienting collapse, a foundering that the activated viewer must also experience as she or he works to account for all of these corkscrewed details.

In these last months of war, Grosz the nascent propagandist (he would soon call himself Propagandada) had learned to enhance the octane of traditional satire with the shock and disorientation of his increasingly fine-tuned compositional techniques. Soon, he and Heartfield would learn to activate appropriated photographs to produce the same impact, achieving "something quite new" with a medium they had come to "loathe" almost as much as painting. But *Wintermärchen* heralded something else as well. Between its legible—albeit satirical—figures and its disorienting mirroring of the day's tumultuous reality, Grosz's last wartime painting defined the compositional poles between which he and Heartfield would navigate as postwar Dadaists.

In many cases, the men labored to impart striking and legible propaganda—to be "deliberately realistic and didactic," as Kessler described Grosz's *Wintermärchen* impulse. In other cases they aimed to assault their viewers with disorienting visions that mirrored the moment and provoked their viewers to relive its neurosis-inducing tumult—in essence, to simulate and stimulate the sort of near-riot experienced by the audience for their April 1918 lecture evening.

In order to navigate most effectively between the poles of mimesis and perceptual disorientation, Grosz and Heartfield would need to resuscitate and improve upon their earlier photomontage practice. Their new compositions would appropriate—among other things—photo fragments that were pictorially legible and often recognizable from their appearance in illustrated weeklies. The signification of these fragments would then be dramatically enhanced or fully scrambled, made fresh or dizzying, by avant-garde compositional techniques. But just as importantly, the coming revolution offered an entirely new language of scandal and sensation on which the men could draw for the content and effect of their pictures. They would reintroduce photography to their practice, in other words, as a spectacular assault on meaning that gave Hausmann and Baader's earlier hoaxes a pictorial form. But this would only happen well after the upheaval's onset, when new political problems required, as Heartfield later emphasized, new means of propaganda.

REVOLUTION IN THE STREET, ASSAULT ON THE MIND

Count Kessler arrived home near 1:00 a.m. after witnessing the events of November 9, 1918, on Berlin's streets. Taking pen in hand, as he did at the end of every day, he wrote the following lines:

> So closes this first day of revolution, which in a few hours has witnessed the downfall of the Hohenzollerns [the Prussian royal house], the dissolution of the German army, and the end of the old order of society in Germany. One of the most memorable and dreadful days in German history.[35]

Even for the relatively jaded Kessler, who had been fully informed of the war's true course, this dramatic discharge of history provoked an intense response that was curiously mixed with memorable excitement and dreadful foreboding.

Events had begun cascading in this direction in the early fall of 1918. At that time the German armed forces recognized the failure of a series of new offensives on the remaining western front. Increasingly, the country saw its allies capitulate or, in the case of Austria-Hungry, dissolve.[36] But the most consequential short-circuiting of the war came on October 28, when sailors mutinied in the naval shipyards of Kiel. Their fleet had been ordered by commanders, unwilling to accept an impending armistice, to undertake a suicidal mission against British blockade vessels. The sailors steadfastly refused, and on November 3 and 4 their mutiny became an open





Fig. 5.3 (left)
Photo reproduction of the lithograph or drawing *Umzug revolutionärer Matrosen in Kiel im November 1918* (*Procession of Revolutionary Sailors in Kiel in November 1918*), 1918. Artist unknown. Stefan Lorant Collection. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (920024).

Fig. 5.4 (right)
Social Democratic Party leader Philipp Scheidemann calling out the new republic from a balcony of the Reichstag, November 9, 1918. Stefan Lorant Collection. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (920024). © 2011 J. Paul Getty Trust.

insurrection in the city of Kiel itself, an event depicted as a near carnival in a print (most likely a lithograph) published in a weekly illustrated magazine (fig. 5.3). In just a few days, as trains from the north ran south and east, cities around Germany came under control of *Räte*, or councils, spontaneously assembled by rebel sailors, soldiers, and workers. On November 7, Count Kessler worried in his diary that "Berlin is being isolated and will soon be only an island."[37] On Saturday, November 9, that upheaval arrived. "The Kaiser has abdicated [and] the revolution has triumphed in Berlin."[38] To great symbolic effect, a group of armed revolutionaries occupied the Kaiser's city place, seemingly duplicating the storming of Saint Petersburg's Winter Palace one year earlier in Russia's revolution.[39]

On this same day, two governments were proclaimed in Berlin. One was announced from a Reichstag balcony by Social Democratic Party leader Philipp Scheidemann, without official SPD authorization (fig. 5.4). This led to a majority socialist government, initially a caretaker entity but soon backed by the old Wilhelmine military and civilian authorities. Two hours later, the "Socialist Republic of Germany" was announced from a balcony in the occupied city palace by Karl Liebknecht, a former SPD parliamentarian who had, along with party colleague and radical pamphleteer Rosa Luxemburg, founded the fervently antiwar Spartacus League in the conflict's first year.[40] The already existing division of Germany's

socialists into majority and radical factions now flared into open conflict on Berlin's streets, the new site of national political contestation.

Once the SPD managed to grasp the reins of power more securely, its provisional coalition, the Council of People's Deputies, signed an armistice with the Allies on November 11. But bullets still whizzed through urban streets and created, as Kessler explained, "sounds which have become as familiar as they were on the Front."[41] In this heated upheaval, the former Kaiser discerned a threat similar to that which led to the Russian czar's death and fled to neutral Holland, where he sought asylum. Not long thereafter, on November 18, the Council of People's Deputies called for the election of a National Assembly at which delegates were to draw up the republic's new constitution. This poll, slated for January 19, 1919, seemed a judicious means of putting the revolution to an effective vote. Still, the upheaval continued to escalate, creating conditions that Germany's new authorities seemed unable to control or suppress. "The executive is wholly powerless," complained Kessler on January 1.[42]

These were momentous events for which few people were prepared, particularly after years of censorship and propaganda that suppressed news of the war's worsening course.[43] Throughout the preceding four and a half years, noncombatants had been left to conjure their own images of the conflict, but few urban citizens could now escape the impact of Germany's defeat and revolution. The unfolding uprising now forced upon them the direct experience of fundamental and frequently violent transformation, if not actual combat. This was a population that had experienced years of war and now possessed "holy sensitivities" that threatened to explode into a national derangement. A mixture of quasi-utopian aspiration and deeply anxious uncertainty—not unlike Kessler's own—dazed the minds of everyday citizens.

The *Berliner Illustrirte* [*sic*] *Zeitung* (*BIZ*) bracingly foregrounded this bedazzlement on the cover of its first issue to fully digest the breaking revolution (fig. 5.5). Earlier photographs published in papers and as postcards at the start of the war in 1914 had shown similar crowds struggling to read posted updates on the fighting (fig. 5.6). Here in the *BIZ*'s hand-drawn postwar image showing a similar consumption of information, the tight framing of a monumental poster column and the bits of legible text emphasize the psychological impact of quickly posted bills. As Berliners press forward to read the Kaiser's abdication notice, they take in news of these "Fateful Days," as the caption intones. The gathered men and women seem stunned, transfixed as if by an unfolding mass spectacle—a trapeze artist's jump or imminent train wreck. Meanwhile, another poster, ostensibly plugging a play "with a cast of 150"—much like the revolutionaries running riot through Berlin—hurls a flaming meteorite back in their direction. Within the ball's blazing form appears the play's title: *Die Welt geht unter* (*The Destruction of the World*). Here lay a telling reflection of the disorientation and foreboding everyday Germans now experienced. A contributor to *Die Kultur der Reklame* (*The Culture of Advertising*), itself a journal oriented toward the aesthetic modernization of poster art and advertising, described much the same in late December:



Fig. 5.5
Edmund Fürst, *Schicksalstage* (*Fateful Days*), on the cover of *Die Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 22, no. 46 (November 17, 1918). Landesarchiv Berlin.



Fig. 5.6
Crowds in Berlin viewing posters announcing the latest war developments, 1914. Stefan Lorant Collection. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (920024). © 2011 J. Paul Getty Trust.

In the last few weeks so very much has occurred. First: the seemingly unshakable order collapsed overnight. Now: utopias of the latest moment stand erected and secured. And not only have the forms of politics and the constitution of the economy changed. No, all our thoughts and intentions are seized by the revolution. Now what we suddenly feel is that: everything is in motion, everything flows, we have emerged from a sudden and unmediated upheaval of all being.[44]

According to this reflection by Dr. Alfred Heller, Germany's revolution redefined the tempo and intensity of contemporary urban experience. In the midst of this civil conflict, Germans willingly pacified by wartime propaganda now experienced reality as a nearly indescribable swirl and a metamorphosis so profound that it struck human "thoughts and intentions" at the very foundations of consciousness. This, of course, was the sort of stunning strike that Heartfield and Grosz had wished to make with their films.

Through the first months of revolution, from November through early January, Heartfield, Grosz, and Herzfelde sought to position themselves aesthetically and politically on a rapidly shifting terrain. Heartfield and Grosz, for example, seemed to have become members of the Novembergruppe not long after its founding on December 3, 1918. Initially convened by a loose band of expressionist artists,

the Novembergruppe was one of a swell of new associations offering impassioned manifestos that vaguely aligned themselves with the revolution. Many of these groups of artists, lawyers, writers, and teachers sought a radical reformation of the professional academies and institutions under which they worked. This was the case with the Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Working Council for Art), for example, which sought a complete restructuring of Wilhelmine art institutions and a new mass audience for art itself.[45]

But the Novembergruppe in particular made the remarkable assertion that radical aesthetic renewal was equivalent to the moment's radical political renewal. A letter circulated by its founders declared that

> the future of art and the gravity of the present hour force us revolutionaries of the spirit (Expressionists, Cubists, Futurists) to unification and close alliance. We therefore direct an urgent call to all visual artists who have shattered the old forms in art to declare their membership in the *Novembergruppe*.[46]

Without saying so directly, this statement clearly equated "revolutionaries of the spirit" with those of politics, and the shattering of old forms in art to the smashing of Germany's Wilhelmine order. For Heartfield and Grosz, this declaration may have bolstered their belief that fragmented and gyrating forms could convey and further provoke the moment's tumult, much as their disjunctive postcard images signposted the war's underlying chaos.

A series of additional developments in January, however, encouraged the men to take a different course, at least temporarily. Among these was the rise of a political party that seemed to embody the revolution, an institution the men now chose to advocate in publications reaching a mass audience. With this as their goal, forms could no longer be so shattered that they failed to produce legible meaning. Instead, Heartfield and Grosz in particular would fashion mass-reproduced pictures that could help their audience "see Berlin with the eyes of a Bolshevist," as one of Heartfield's new advertisements hawking the painter's drawings explained.[47] On hiatus from Dada and filled with hope for a new socialist country, the men now sought to forge a visual culture for the revolution. To accomplish this task, they pursued the legible pole defined by Grosz's *Wintermärchen* painting.

THE BIRTH OF GERMAN COMMUNISM

Seeing its claim to power dissolving as the provisional government's authority rose, the Spartacus League called a three-day national congress beginning on December 30. The primary purpose of the gathering was to form a full-fledged, separate party of revolution. This meant that it first had to separate itself from the German Independent Social Democratic Party, of which it had officially been a part since 1917.[48] At the conclusion of the first morning session, Karl Liebknecht declared



Die Rote Fahne

Zentralorgan des Spartacusbundes

Kiel in Deutschland voran.

Das, was ist.

Verordnungen.

Fig. 5.7
Die rote Fahne (*The Red Banner*), front page of issue dated November 21, 1918. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

the separation complete and pronounced the new Communist Party of Germany (Spartacus League). According to a transcript of the congress's proceedings, there were no induction ceremonies or celebrations. The delegates simply moved on to form a program. Only on January 1, as the assembly closed, did Liebknecht retroactively pronounce the affair to have been the party's founding congress.[49]

The new Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Spartakus Bund), or KPD, was a terribly late arrival. Innumerable parties had formed shortly after the November 18 announcement of the January 19 National Assembly election. Moreover, the new institution's decision to boycott the vote as a protest against parliamentary democracy left its representation during the ensuing campaign largely to its opponents. Commentator Ernst Bauer wrote in *Die Kultur der Reklame*, "Hot was the electoral combat for the National Assembly! Every party from the extreme Right to the Independent Social Democrats appeared on plan and canvassed for their goal. Only the



Fig. 5.8
Rudi Feld, *Die Gefahr des Bolschewismus* (*The Danger of Bolshevism*), 1919. In *Wasmuth Art Bulletin*, no. 5. Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, NY.

'Communist Party' of the Spartacus League was absent."[50] Virtually the only print venue at the KPD's disposal was its textually dense, pictorially impoverished, and rhetorically heated daily, *Die rote Fahne* (*Red Banner*; fig. 5.7).[51] Aside from this, the Spartacus League went largely unrepresented, except as a foreign Bolshevik monster on right-wing posters financed by banking interests, military aristocrats, and silent government colluders who formed Spartacus's antipode: the Anti-Bolshevist League (fig. 5.8).[52] In one of these pictures, German communism menaced the country as a colossal figure of death. Clenching a saber in the mouth of its grimacing skull, this black-draped figure stalks the countryside, leaving endless graves and a colossal gallows. These were powerful images that far surpassed the intensity of posters produced in the war. Such works unhesitatingly tapped into the emotional springs of lowbrow kitsch. Although "unworthy of discussion," as a poster critic complained at the time, they nonetheless directed pictorial vehemence against a German communism that all but refused to make its own images in response.[53]

These developments, particularly the absence of a communist pictorial presence, compounded by the rise in partisan violence, spurred Heartfield, Grosz, and Herzfelde to action. Heartfield even claimed to have joined the party on December 31, while others asserted that he took his membership book that day directly from Rosa Luxemburg herself. But considering the course of the party's program discussion and its retroactive founding, this is highly unlikely.[54] Far more plausibly, all three men joined the KPD later in January, after the hapless provisional government called out irregular right-wing troops, the *Freikorps*, to suppress renewed and particularly violent street fighting. In the midst of this clampdown these irregular fighters arrested and summarily executed Luxemburg and Liebknecht. This high point of the revolution came to be known as the "Spartacus Uprising"—although the KPD actually sat out the January fighting.

The violent developments of January awoke a bitterness in the three men whose depth Kessler described as "impossible to exaggerate."[55] On the afternoon of January 18, the day before the National Assembly election, Herzfelde visited the count and "frankly admitted to being a communist."[56] At the same time, Heartfield and Grosz had settled on a specific objective for what the monteur later described as their new "art propaganda made in the service of the worker's movement": they would forge a combative visual culture for the young KPD, which had not yet attended to this task.[57] And they would do so in the pages of a new periodical to be published by their own Malik Verlag. As Kessler recounted on January 18:

> I discussed with Herzfelde the publication of a new periodical of a literary, artistic, and political character, brought out at irregular intervals, cheap (not more than fifty pfennigs per number), newspaper-style make-up but in accordance with his own [i.e., Heartfield's] typographical ideas, and directed in the first instance toward street sales. In answer to my question as to which of the younger writers and artists are imbued with the Spartacus-Bolshevist outlook, Herzfelde named Däubler, Grosz, himself, the whole of the Malik Verlag, and everybody connected with it as well.[58]

These young modernists now seemed less interested in confronting their audiences with disorienting pictures that reflected the country's harried state. Instead, they wished to share their new radical-left outlook. Photography and scandal, generally in an immediately intelligible form, would form key components of this new, piercing vision.

EVERYONE HIS OWN FOOTBALL

On February 15, 1919, over three months after Germany's upheaval began, the Malik Verlag finally gathered enough money and contributors to release its first new publication since *Die neue Jugend*'s final issue of June 1917 (fig. 5.9). And in these pages lay the first solid attempt to disseminate Spartacist—and now KPD—points of view through a mass-media format outside of the party's own low-circulation daily newspaper. Oriented toward the task of clear political advocacy, the new journal declined the wild typography, multiple colors, and baffling texts of its predecessor, the last issue of *Neue Jugend* (fig. 3.10). Instead the editors had turned to something else to enliven its front page (in particular) and thus provide an alternative to the party's sober and difficult to read text: photography. Yet these would be photographs so heavily inflected by satire that they suggested double and, thus, unstable meanings. Even its satirical title, *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball* (*Everyone His Own Football*), announced this general jocular orientation. What followed inside was sardonically humorous and heavily illustrated with compelling editorial pictures, most of them drawn by Grosz.[59]

The groundbreaking cover was relatively simple in organization and sported a large central image composed of appropriated photographs. Subtitled "German Masculine Beauty I," this composition ridiculed the country's new authority figures by placing their portraits on the blades of a folding fan, an accouterment normally associated with coy femininity. "Who is the most beautiful?" queries the headline above. This plucky composition publicly heralded Heartfield and Grosz's return to photography and, more specifically, photomontage. Moreover, it did so, quite consciously, in the terms of open spectacle that now dominated Germany's public sphere. Heartfield and Grosz intended that this cover respond to, and cause, panic.

With this publication the Malik circle had cobbled together a far more accessible and appealing face for the KPD than the party itself had managed to create up to that point. The photomontages on its cover, both of which were made in collaboration, were the first that the men had actually published.[60] This development marks the beginning of Heartfield's lifelong engagement with mass-disseminated political photomontage.

Attentive to what had become a battle over defeated Germany's postwar identity, both compositions play a highly legible satirical game with the pictorial terms of personal and national character. In the smaller photomontage, Wieland Herzfelde as

Durch Post u. Buchhandel à Nummer 40 Pf. Abonnement: Quartal (6 Nummern incl. Zustellung) 2 Mark. Vorzugs-Ausgabe: 100 numm. Exemplare 1-20 sign. auf echt Zanders Bütten à 10 M., 21-100 à 3 M.

Preis 40 Pf.

Anzeigenpreise: 1 Quadratzentimeter 0,50 Mark, einmal wiederholt 10% Rabatt, zweimal wiederholt 20% Rabatt. Exzentrischer Satz: 1 Quadratzentimeter 1,00 Mark, bei gleichen Rabattsätzen.



"Jedermann sein eigner Fussball"

Illustrierte Halbmonatsschrift

1. Jahrgang — Der Malik-Verlag, Berlin-Leipzig — Nr. 1, 15. Februar 1919

Sämtliche Zuschriften betr. Red. u. Verl. an: Wieland Herzfelde, Berlin-Halensee, Kurfürstendamm 76. Sprechst.: Sonntags 12—2 Uhr

Preisausschreiben!

Wer ist der Schönste??



Deutsche Mannesschönheit 1

(Vergl. Seite 4)

Die Sozialisierung der Parteifonds

Eine Forderung zum Schutze vor allgemein üblichem Wahlbetrug

(Diese Ausführungen sollen den Unfug unserer Nationalversammlung selbst vom Gesichtspunkt der Demokraten aus illustrieren, jener Leute, die meinen, ein Volk dürfe keine Regierung besitzen, deren Niveau dem seinen eigenen Durchschnitts überlegen ist.)

Man mag Demokrat sein, deutsch-sozialistischer Untertan oder Kommunist, man mag mit Schiller sagen: Verstand ist stets bei wenigen nur gewesen oder behaupten auf jede Stimme komme es (sogar mit Recht) an, die Tatsache wird man nicht bestreiten: Wahlen gehören zu den ge-

"Progress Dada" looks to the right with trepidation as his left hand raises a colossally oversize bowler hat. With this gesture he politely and submissively greets the social power cocked between the quotation marks of the magazine's title, *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball*. The montage and the journal's title reveal his true identity not as a human subject but as an inflated sphere to be kicked about as a frightful Wilhelmine-like order is reconsolidated. The result is a visually odd revelation of the German subject's status under democracy, a condition mirrored in Progress Dada's pictorially awkward form. His neck connects to his bloated football torso via a stiff collar and dainty tie, the latter draped over his girth with a stubby flaccidity. His right arm holds a walking cane, extended back as if to brace for the inevitable kick, yet his outsize legs, with their handsome trousers, promise a degree of physical and class-based stability. This unreal agglomeration of photo-fragments thereby unmasks the underlying realness of his new Weimar status as a victim of counterrevolutionary republican violence. This, at least, was the KPD's view: the idealized democratic citizen was now the frequently punted subject.

In the larger composition, the republic's leaders, members of the SPD-led government that had been voted into power on February 11, are arranged as if to administer the football's kick. The men pose confidently, with chests out, stiffened chins, and a clear gaze. But their masculine physiognomies are arrayed on a feminine folding fan, an arch of coquettish display. Similar photomontaged tableaux from the revolution's outset had been published by party-oriented and private associations as praiseful tributes to the provisional government of SPD and USPD members, the initial Council of People's Deputies. One such postcard, dating to November 10, 1918, features overlapping photographic cameos against a diamond-and-square-tiled ground (fig.

Fig. 5.9 (opposite)
John Heartfield (typography, graphic design, and photomontage) and George Grosz (photomontage), *Contest! Who Is the Most Beautiful? German Masculine Beauty I*, on the cover of *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball*, no. 1 (February 15, 1919). The figures on the fan's blades are members of the second provisional Council of People's Deputies, including Philipp Scheidemann (third from left) and Friedrich Ebert (second from right). Below them are interior minister Gustav Noske, former general Erich Ludendorff, and Matthias Erzberger, an armistice negotiator and Catholic Central Party member of the Reichstag. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (1568-722).



Fig. 5.10
Members of the first Council of People's Deputies. From left to right: Wilhelm Dittmann (writer, USPD), Otto Landsberg (lawyer, SPD), Hugo Haase (lawyer, USPD), Friedrich Ebert (SPD), Emil Barth (party secretary, USPD), Philipp Scheidemann (SPD). Postcard, 1918. Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin.

5.10), not unlike the galaxy of German and Polish military leaders whose cameos circle a besieged Warsaw on a 1915 postcard (fig. 5.11). Lacking time to form a fresh visual regime of political power, the country's newly empowered political constituency clearly adopted the existing photo-based iconography of power forged by wartime image makers. The stars of this new governmental order, like their predecessors, constitute a political cosmos, in this case centered on a flapping red flag rather than an embattled city. They gaze toward the center and, hence, toward the card's adoring purchaser, whom the men provisionally served.

In Heartfield and Grosz's version, the gazes of these men (who no longer include the independent socialists) are more scattered, as the figures seem to strut their authority in a far more self-conscious display. Their anxious vanity is displayed above a striding General Ludendorff (recently returned from a short Swedish exile), a diminutive Gustav Noske (at left, the interior minister responsible for January's antirevolutionary clampdown), and the floating head of Matthias Erzberger (at right, the armistice negotiator)—the last two, judging by their placement, seeming toadies of the former quartermaster. All, however, are reduced to superficial display and obsequiousness, drawn into a fictive pageant by the headline that asks "Who is the most beautiful?" As in Heartfield and Grosz's earlier postcards, the difference between these two significations opens a satirical cleft that ultimately seems to say just as much about the validity of the photographs as their represented subjects.

To make this composition, Heartfield and Grosz had appropriated press photographs generated by the new government's carefully staged photo opportunities. The result of these shoots was idealizing images that coordinated well with earlier patterns of imperial photography (fig. 5.12). Like their forebears, these new pictures took pride of place in the nation's major illustrated weeklies. But in *Who Is the Most*



Fig. 5.11
Der Ring um Warschau (*The Ring around Warsaw*). Postcard commemorating the Siege of Warsaw, 1915. Deutsches Historisches Museum.



Fig. 5.12
Robert Sennecke, Members of the second Council of People's Deputies during the National Assembly in Weimar, February 1919. From left to right: Dr. Otto Landsberg, Philipp Scheidemann, Gustav Noske, Freidrich Ebert, Rudolf Wissel. Stefan Lorant Collection. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (920024). © 2011 J. Paul Getty Trust.

Beautiful? Heartfield and Grosz overturn this pictorial idealization and reveal a chasm of signification between intention (masculine authority) and effect (feminine display). In doing so with photography, they may have returned to the medium they had earlier abandoned, but their new use bracingly demonstrated photography's inevitable contingency before the powerfully distorting forces of ideology and desire. The men, in other words, had not changed their opinion about the medium: it was still something of which they were wary.

POLITICS AND BAD TASTE

In their effort to produce legible political satire, Heartfield and Grosz had not only returned to photography but also significantly softened their radical compositional emphasis on rupture. The harried inscriptions of multisensorial tumult that had prevailed in their postcards, in *Die neue Jugend*'s typography, in Heartfield's films, and behind Grosz's *Wintermärchen* figures had subsided significantly. Sonorous text and exploding forms were gone. Now, both of the *Jedermann* montages involve a relatively straightforward juxtaposition of appropriated photo fragments and mild contrasts of scale. This approach helped communicate the difference between illusion (the original intention behind these fragments) and the real as posited by Heartfield and Grosz (the postmontage effect). The montages thus do not shock vision but train it to see beneath the surface of political appearances. But although the artists had abandoned their earlier compositional strategy of rupture, they nonetheless found something else to agitate and enliven their montaged fragments. That something was kitsch.



Fig. 5.13
Eduard von Grützner, decorated folding fan, 1892. Reproduced in Fritz Freiherr von Ostini, *Eduard von Grützner* (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klassing, 1902).

The central photomontage, *Who Is the Most Beautiful? Contest: German Masculine Beauty I*, conveys its beauty pageant theme through the ladylike conceit of a personalized folding fan. Grosz and Heartfield specifically had in mind a late nineteenth-century accouterment assembled or commissioned by coquettish women who applied images of family members, friends, and admirers for coy display (fig. 5.13). One such knickknack figured prominently in a monograph on the folksy Bavarian painter Eduard von Grützner. Grosz proudly held this book in his collection and claimed to have feverishly copied Grützner's work as a child.[61] With this montage, he continued to indulge in this tacky and sentimental form in Heartfield's company.

Equally lowbrow is the theme of the beauty contest. Such competitions flourished in the desire-driven culture that arose in the early days of Weimar, the period after Wilhelmine controls vanished and before new ones were instituted. One event, which raised a great fuss in Berlin around the time that *Jedermann* was published, advertised itself from *Litfaßsäule* (poster columns) with the question "Who has the most beautiful legs in Berlin?" The ensuing controversy over morals became a press sensation that forced the management of the Marble Palace, where the competition was to take place, to cancel its contract with the event's planner.[62] Heartfield and Grosz thus pushed their composition into the same sort of media storm that Baader and Hausmann had sought for their wartime Dada bluffs. But the advertiser and the painter did so not to dematerialize their work into a massive spectacle, as Hausmann and Baader had, but to enhance the appeal and legibility of their political critique for a new mass audience. They had appropriated not just photo fragments but also the tawdry edge of young Weimar's popular culture, in order to give those fragments their strikingly different but clearly recognizable meaning. They were, in other words, mining the new spectacular culture of early Weimar's mass audience in order to instruct broad swaths of readers and viewers in a specifically communist way of

perceiving the world. Rich and coherent kitsch could now replace outright formal disorientation as the agitator in their figure-based satire.

Under this new rubric, one of the two montages positioned Germany's post-imperial leaders as contestants in a bawdy American-style beauty contest, their masculinity transformed into the feminized display of electoral politics. In the other, Herzfelde, the upright middle-class man, became a soccer ball to be kicked about by political reaction. By using devalued kitsch and churlish satire in this manner, Heartfield and Grosz had reinvested photography with a capacity to reveal the scandalous "truths" behind façades of power built with photographic emulsion. Thus retooled, the medium essentially illustrated the unseen machinations revealed by Herzflede's sober article (discussed below) proposing the socialization of party campaign funds that, as private money, supported similarly deceptive façades. Here lay the men's model for a new KPD visual culture.[63]

At a moment of literal revolution, which struck citizens, in Alfred Heller's phrase, as "a sudden and unmediated upheaval of all being," Heartfield and Grosz proffered coherent means to see a reality that more than ever overwhelmed and stunned the capacity of perception.[64] In so doing they pressed their specific points of view, their *Standpunkte*, in a context as yet unfixed by the dominant views of newspapers, political leaders, and other powerful agents. In the coming months, however, visions that vilified communism and validated the new democratic republic would increasingly stabilize popular understandings of the moment, forcing the men to pivot between the montage approach they fashioned for *Jedermann* and another that refused the very possibility of meaning within the country's increasingly fixed vision of itself. The demise of their German communist utopia, in other words, pushed them back to the fury of Dada.

THE REVOLUTION'S FAILURE AND THE ONSET OF BITTERNESS

On Friday evening, March 7, 1919, Wieland Herzfelde's doorbell rang. Sitting in the Kurfürstendamm atelier "that served as my apartment, editorial office, publishing house, and paper warehouse," he likely expected the caller to be his brother John or friend George. Instead, he found two detectives accompanied by a pair of armed soldiers, the last of whom counted among the *Freikorps* or irregular fighters who had violently suppressed the street fighting two months earlier. Now, as renewed conflict flared through Berlin's city center and working-class districts in what came to be known as the March Clashes, the soldiers were reprising that role. This was the last great series of general strikes and militant clampdowns in Germany's 1918–1919 revolution. At Herzfelde's apartment, the visitors "held an issue of *Jedermann sein eigner Fußball* in front of my face and asked in a brusque tone, 'Are you the publisher?'" As he scanned this object, Herzfelde surely recognized the photomontages on its title page. "I answered affirmatively."[65]

Herzfelde published these words three week later, after he had been taken into *Schutzhaft* ("protective custody") and abused much as Liebknecht and Luxemburg had been before their assassinations. Only through Count Kessler's dedicated intervention had he been released. The young publisher now dedicated the entire second issue of *Jedermann*'s follow-on magazine, *Die Pleite* (*Bankruptcy*), to a matter-of-fact account of his captivity. The suppression of upheaval that Germany's provisional government initiated in early January was being replayed in March at a brutal pitch; not only was the revolution nearing a conclusive end, but those who publicly sided with it were facing harsh reprisal. "The government intends on ruthlessly depriving the Communist Party of its intellectual leaders," Grosz told Kessler on March 16, having himself barely escaped arrest in this same dragnet.[66] As *Freikorps* troops mowed down leftist fighters and snagged radical intellectuals, and as armed proletarians hunted down wayward troops or fought for control of critical buildings, "the bitterness on both sides [became] boundless," a friend of Heartfield and Herzfelde told Kessler.[67] It would be just this boundless anger that motivated Heartfield, and many of the artists around him, to develop Dada's final form of photomontage.

The aesthetic impact of this rage took shape quickly. *Jedermann* had been banned not long after its February 15, 1919, release, the censors citing Mehring's poem as the primary offense. Malik responded by simply renaming the periodical *Die Pleite*. A new issue was then released in early March, its pages filled with Grosz's increasingly sharp hand-drawn caricatures, the progressively earnest writing of its contributors, but no photomontage. "The literary contents are terribly pedestrian," complained Kessler in his diary, "a collection of manifestoes, yelps, and solemn pronouncements instead of wit and colorfulness."[68] The second issue of *Die Pleite*, fully dedicated to Herzfelde's sober *Schutzhaft* essay, represents an extreme of this newly straightforward, or *sachlich*, approach. "In the prevailing situation, and after what [Wieland] has seen," wrote Kessler on March 21, "he feels it impossible to strike a lighthearted note in his periodical."[69]

It was Heartfield, however, who outlined the larger aesthetic consequence of this bitter reckoning most profoundly. As Kessler recounted after a March 23 visit by the monteur:

> In connection with his periodical, [Heartfield] expressed his utter repugnance to the publication of poems by [Theodor] Däubler or [Johannes] Becher or indeed anything that is just art. . . . The main thing is the pulse of the time [*der Puls der Zeit*] and the greater community in which it resonates. He went on to reject past artistic achievement too, even if in its own time it did possess precisely this quality of contemporaneity. He and his friends do not want either to document their actions or to create any kind of durable record and thus to impede posterity.[70]

In these words, one can clearly recognize the outlines of a revived Berlin Dada inflected by radicalized communism. Heartfield's near-manifesto roundly dismissed any self-expressive or creative intervention that mediated the moment's genuine

beat. With the revolution gone awry, "anything that is just art" offered mere distraction. The emphasis must instead be on revealing the vital here and now in which the upheaval, and specifically the KPD, was foundering. Heartfield, it seems, had in mind his earlier strategies of montage, which (seemingly) suppressed the author's voice in favor of direct appropriations from the realm of things and mass-produced images. He was prepared once more, that is, to "cut out the time . . . so it should speak . . . for itself," as Franz Pfemfert had put it in 1915.[71]

Yet it was now 1919, and Heartfield's statement resonated more clearly with Richard Huelsenbeck's Berlin Dada manifesto, read at the April 1918 lecture evening. This document similarly lambasted aesthetic self-expression in favor of "the most primitive relationship to the surrounding reality," including the "explosions of last week" and "the shots of the preceding days." Of course, Hausmann and Baader had already realized this mandate with their late-war bluffs, spectacles whose heated press response Baader described six years later as a *Spiegel-Reflex*, or "mirror-reflex."[72] By this reckoning, extended reactions in print to Dada's provocations constituted a collective, unmediated, semiautomatic, and nearly photographic registration of the time, a new form of public art imprinted with sharp temporal specificity by the moment itself.[73] This was not realism in the traditional mimetic sense, a reproduction defined by pictorial seamlessness and an apparent optical correspondence with the visible world. Instead, it was a new, agitated realism based on a fuller understanding of representation, one in which all the senses were made to experience the reproduced world. In the new postwar context, Germany's revolution and its suppression became a ready-made mass spectacle. Heartfield's stated commitment was thus to an unmediated "mirror-reflex" that would uncover this upheaval's authentic—but increasingly repressed—pulse. So directly would this reflex react to its time that no correspondence, notes, or plans would be left behind to encumber future producers in their pursuit of this same mandate for immediate contemporaneity.



Fig. 5.14
George Grosz, *Von Geldsacks Gnaden* (*By the Grace of Money Bags*), on cover of *Die Pleite*, no. 1 (early March 1919). Galerie Bassenge, Berlin. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

Yet, as the *sachlich* account of Wieland's travails in custody suggests, and as Grosz's *Wintermärchen* painting anticipated, this direct reflection took two distinct forms. In one, Malik pursued an aggressively political and journalistic line on contemporary events in its magazines.[74] Here one found news, commentary, translated statements on art and politics from Russia, social theory, Walter Mehring's occasional satirical poems, and of course Grosz's tightly focused caricatures, the sort of pictorial assaults on majority socialists or reactionary types that made the painter famous (fig. 5.14). In the other approach, these same men observed "the mad end-product of the ruling social order" that was quickly returning itself to power, "and we burst out laughing," as Grosz explained five years later.[75] Heartfield, Grosz, and Herzfelde were returning to Dada as impulsive belly laugh, a near-ludicrous response that used the body's spasmodic quaking to register reflexively the bitter repression of their tumultuous epoch. At this new moment of transition, when the utopian dream of a postwar socialist society ended in (as they saw it) "white terror"—an allusion to the domestic opponents of Russia's "red" revolution—Heartfield would engage this reflex to reflect the absurdity of retrenchment and attempt to provoke a new,

communist-inspired revolt. Anything that was merely "art" had to be attacked and cleared away.

DADA AGAIN

Just over a month after brutally rampaging *Freikorps* troops returned a rebellious Berlin to what the government referred to as "quiet and order," a decidedly noisy and disordered Berlin Dada reconstituted itself as a movement. On April 30, 1919, a handful of Club Dada's existing and new members held a Dada Evening at the gallery—or *Graphisches Kabinett*—of I. B. Neumann, the venue where Richard Huelsenbeck had read his "First Dada Speech in Germany" in January 1918. The lecture evening that followed on April 12 of that same year, of course, had dramatically realized the text of Huelsenbeck's call for an expression of the tormented moment, with participants evoking the sounds of war and hurling the abuse of Prussian officers at their audience. But now, in 1919, the performers proffered a spectacle reflective of this early Weimar moment.

Huelsenbeck, for example, recited "What Is Dadaism and What Does It Want in Germany," a proclamation that read like an absurdist party declaration.[76] Perhaps he had in mind Luxemburg and Liebknecht's late 1918 flier entitled "What Does Spartacus Want?" or similar handbills that other parties showered on Germany's urban streets. Further reflections of the moment characterized the following performance, on May 24. This event featured, among other things, a gun fired by Grosz to start and end a frenetic race between a sewing machine and a typewriter, Walter Mehring reading poems that insulted his audience with vaguely political abuses such as "You Banana-Eating and Exploiting Leviathans," and Johannes Baader's surely megalomaniacal lecture on "politics."[77] Ben Hecht, who was present for this second performance, described the audience response as a "counterrevolution" led by Wilhelmine-era officers in the audience who "drew guns and fired at the stage" in the style of rampaging *Freikorps* soldiers.[78]

Fellow Dadaist and lifelong photomontage artist Hannah Höch, who along with Hausmann represented a less political wing of Berlin Dada more concerned with attacking expressionism and traditional notions of art, reported that at many of the subsequent performances "the situation became dangerous" as rattled members of the "audience left their seats and tried to storm the stage."[79] A reviewer for the *Hannoverscher Kurier* wrote after a December 7 event that the Dadaists "have had the success they wanted: they want turmoil; they want nothing but derision, dissolution, smashing up."[80] Dada's new performances essentially stopped, rewound, and replayed early Weimar's revolutionary history. As had been the case just a few months earlier on Germany's urban streets, these miniature revolutions offered provocatively incomprehensible "upheavals of all being" and provoked violent reactions. For Heartfield and Grosz, who, along with Herzfelde, formed the strongly political edge of Berlin Dada, such rupture was meant to be the catalyst for a new



Fig. 5.15
Robert Sennecke, view of three photo posters by Heartfield at the Erste Internationale Dada-Messe (First International Dada Fair), 1920. Berlinische Galerie, Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst, Fotografie und Architektur.

German political shakeup, much like that wished for by the early futurists, albeit instigated from the left rather than the right.

Here again reigned the movement's multisensory assault and riot-inducing tactics. In the context of violently restored "order," this bringing of life's "chaotic movement . . . to unmediated perception," as Huelsenbeck described Dada's new gestures, reflected an underlying resistance that the government and its allies desperately labored to contain.[81] Dada's assault on the senses and on rationality, in other words, now took on a far stronger political resonance, particularly for the movement's more politically oriented members. And, as has become increasingly apparent, this assault was specifically derived from the chaos that had accompanied the apex of the now-expired revolution, that is, the disordered "pulse of the time" that Heartfield would also laud in 1944 as an eruption of the "lower impulses," a contesting of authority and passive or retrograde forms of high culture.[82]

Although Heartfield declined to participate in the revitalized movement's first two performances, held in April and May 1919, he played a primary role in many of those that followed, adopting the role of Dada's detail-oriented technician. This resembled his ongoing position at the Malik Verlag, where he served as graphic designer, typographer, and tenacious gopher. Now he became the *Dadamonteur*, or Dada Mechanic. Among other things, in July 1919 he snapped portraits of the other Dadaists and, with these photographs, composed calling cards that bore the given

member's Dada name. It was apparently then that he took the image of screaming *Dadasoph* Hausmann, and most likely the cool profile picture of *Propagandada* and *Dadamarschall* Grosz. These pictures can be seen on giant photo posters that Heartfield produced for the First International Dada Fair, held in the summer of 1920 and discussed below (fig. 5.15).

As the spring of 1919 staggered into summer and Wieland Herzfelde became depressed at the revolution's increasingly undeniable failure, Heartfield and Grosz began seeking additional means of encoding this sonorous *Puls der Zeit* pictorially.[83] It is then that the duo revisited their original wartime approach to such things as pictorial disjunction, the *geisteskrank* (mentally ill) artist who submits himself or herself to the epoch's crashing reality, the placing of the age in quotations, and the suggested violence of slicing a quotation from its original context.

By November, Heartfield and Grosz had begun appropriating mass-printed texts and images, which they *montiert*, or assembled, into pictorial registrations of what they saw as their moment's underlying tumult. In both the scandalous happenings of the spring and these exploded montages, this turmoil itself, rather than artistic composition-making, seemed to direct performance behaviors and the imprinting of images, in both cases casting back a quasi-photographic reflection of Weimar's great (but increasingly repressed) disorder. As Hausmann pronounced in the third issue of Berlin's house periodical *Der Dada*, "Dada practically creates the world according to its own circumstances; it uses all forms and customs in order to destroy the moral, hypocritical, bourgeois world by its own means."[84] If one takes this understanding of Dada in combination with Heartfield's rejection of "anything that is just art," than it should indeed be the "pulse of the times and the greater community in which it resonates" that determine the structures and themes of the Dadamonteur's work. What, then, was this pulse of revolution that his montages reflected, and how did it figure pictorially in his new montage and photography?

THE CULTURE OF REVOLUTION: MENTAL WEAPONS

As Kessler's account of urban gunfire and the *BIZ*'s illustration of an eye-catching poster column would suggest (fig. 5.5), the revolution's shock to perception constituted more than the abstracted disorientation of motion and flow noted by Alfred Heller in *Die Kultur der Reklame*. It also provided a surfeit of specific multisensory stimuli regularly delivered on the electrified urban street. Another commentator, Ernst Bauer, described just this reality in his article "The Political Face of the Street," also published in *Die Kultur der Reklame*: "A tidal wave of political events that is unprecedented in the history of our people reflects itself from the smallest to the greatest expressions of life. . . . This is most evident in the appearance of the street, that artery of public life."[85] Here shots of a ballistic, spoken, and pictorial character assaulted an already traumatized population. In this respect, the country's upheaval





Fig. 5.16 (left)
SPD propaganda in Leipzig Square before the National Assembly election of January 19, 1919. Stefan Lorant Collection. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (920024). © 2011 J. Paul Getty Trust.

Fig. 5.17 (right)
Poster-covered wall and flier distribution in Berlin, ca. January 1919. Stefan Lorant Collection. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (920024). © 2011 J. Paul Getty Trust.

resembled a colossal Dada performance. The city's streets thus provided a ready-made reserve of pictorial and performance models that Dadaists such as Heartfield and Grosz could mine a few months later, when the subsiding upheaval required fresh provocation.

In the first months of revolution, for example, Berlin's pedestrians had encountered innumerable posters, fliers, and brochures—as Bauer put it, a "papery flood." "At first scattered but then in an ever-growing slew, the new government's first announcements stuck to columns, houses, and shop windows." Myriad flyers also circulated, despite the specter of paper shortages that the previous government had used to contain the print media (fig. 5.16). Then "from somewhere and sometime, printed magazine pages grew from the soil and soon covered the rain-wet pavement and streets."[86] One might imagine in this proliferation the appropriated text, postcards, and mass-printed photo images that flowed into Heartfield and Grosz's *Sonniges Land* (*Sunny Land*), collaboratively assembled in November or December of 1919 (fig. 2.16). Its scraps of text mirror the environment described by Bauer: "Away with these worker councils." "Only on the Rhine, there there [*da da*] is where I want

to live!" The composition's officers, angels, and passively sweet children scream in an incoherent transcription of reactionary Germany's anthems, heralding the new "Sunny Land." Here is what Matt Biro describes as Dada's consummate critique of the authoritarian subject, an image that dismantles the ciphers of Prussian and reactionary power with which so many Germans identified.[87]

These plaintive fragments overlap each other in a "papery flood" much like that described by Bauer, which covered the architectural surfaces of revolutionary Berlin (fig. 5.17). Germany's capital took on the exotic appearance of a carnival, its transportation hubs and major intersections transformed into "carpets" in "flogging" red and "symphonies" of other colors:

> Still higher swelled the papery flood. Berlin's streets debauched themselves in orgies of color while the buildings exchanged their gray faces for various excited masks. Every free space was ruthlessly covered up.[88]

Moreover, "there bloomed a street business in brochure sales. For little money one informed oneself about 'Tirpitz [Germany's former naval chief] the gravedigger of the German fleet'; and another issue promised enlightenment: 'Where does Liebknecht get his money?'"

Many were troubled by this flood. Referring to a new poster by a propaganda artist who had become famous during the war, Bauer saw a socialist drummer "in a double quick-step stance" who alarmingly "pulled eyes" toward himself as he warned that freedom could only be reached through "order" (fig. 5.18). But such images provided ready pictorial fodder for the Dadaists' montages. Indeed, the voracious consumption of poster-ready surface space recalls the First International Dada Fair of 1920 (June–August), where montages, posters, and objects crowded against each other in carnivalesque profusion. Reviewers of this exhibition, which had been hurriedly curated by Heartfield, Grosz, and Hausmann, regularly compared its individual images to products of the insane and its dense installation to the chaos of Germany's downfall.[89] During the revolution, the same effect was created by crowds of people carrying placards on poles and sporting arms full of fliers (fig. 5.19). The heated reviews of Dada's Fair thus evoked images of the revolution that would have struck many observers with powerful sensorial force. The head of the provisional government's *Werbedienst* (publicity office), Paul Zech, described the 1918–1919 assault of persuasion on the street as "a battle with mental weapons." This heralded a time, he explained, "when propaganda will constitute the sole means of combat between peoples."[90]

Before World War I, the term "propaganda," in Germany, largely designated publicity, customarily realized as advertising. After 1914 it increasingly referenced the images found on war loan posters and the aggressive texts disseminated in newspapers and speeches, which aimed to shore up support for the war without distressing domestic noncombatants. Now that the conflict had migrated from the front to the



Fig. 5.18
Alexander Cay, *Parole: Frieden! Wir erreichen ihn durch Ordnung!* (*Word: Freedom. We Reach It through Order!*), December 1918. In *Das Plakat* 10, no. 4 (July 1919): 260 (NYPL page-stamped 427). Art & Architecture Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations..



Fig. 5.19
Propaganda group campaigning for the National Assembly election in front of the Reich Chancellery, 77 Wilhelm Street, January 19, 1919. Stefan Lorant Collection. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (920024). © 2011 J. Paul Getty Trust.

streets and actually involved former noncombatants, propaganda had to fight a far more aggressive battle to influence Germany's empowered but conflicted masses. Dada, and Heartfield specifically, learned this lesson about pictorial battle well.

At this moment of free ideological competition, any pictorial invention could be taken for a trial run, creating an atmosphere of experimentation that recalled the avant-garde's own efforts. Hans Friedeberger, a contributor to *Das Plakat*, which, like its sister journal *Die Kultur der Reklame*, dedicated itself to the aesthetic modernizing of poster and advertising art, remarked on precisely this phenomenon. "For the first time," he explained, "publicity reached out beyond ordinary means of posting. When every smooth and post-ready surface cried a choir of admonitions, warnings, and entreaties, the individual or the individual party sought to enforce its forceful appeals with depictions that were always evocative in new ways and that were time and again punchy."[91] Heartfield and Grosz must have recognized this evocative novelty as an extension of their earlier efforts but on a vastly greater scale, and later as a model for their most rambunctious Dada work.

As commentator Peter Rosner of *Das Plakat* noted a few months later, the fall of restrictions meant that since November 1918, the poster artist "can, if he wants, translate the hate that ravages our political life unchecked into a flaming and agitated pictorial language."[92] It would be just such agitated pictorial expression that Heartfield and Grosz now channeled for their full-on Dada photomontages, producing compositions that translated the experience of these mental weapons

into sensory-rich images. Heartfield hoped to re-create just this effect in his *Hustle and Bustle in the Universal City*, which borrowed from Grosz's drawing and American cinema to fashion a flaming, screaming, disquieting strike on perception (fig. 4.15).

Aside from Bauer's "papery flood" and the proliferation of pictorial "mental weapons," the revolution also saw a spectacular rise in the prevalence of street agitators. With Wilhelmine-era restrictions gone, all Berlin became an expanded Hyde Park Corner, with restive citizens and radical party representatives screaming their screeds. According to Stefan Großmann, writing in the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung*, Germany had entered the "Age of the Orator":

> In the street, in all halls, at the edge of monuments, in the streetcars, everywhere: orators, orators, orators. Politicians and workers, housewives and professors, actors and pastors, college-prep students and soldiers, they all orate publicly and clandestinely.

Regarding this ubiquitous compulsion to agitate in the new era of speaking liberty, Grosßmann simply concluded, "We have all become orators!" It was this sonorous, overstimulated landscape that Ben Hecht found when he arrived in Berlin.[93]

In this electric atmosphere, anyone with a loud voice and a few animated gestures could become a Richard Huelsenbeck:

> A single person on the street only needs to say a few words too loudly and accompany this with a pair of discharged hand movements. Then immediately a flash gathering develops under the open sky. Popular mummers, agreement and heckling, discussion and demonstrations follow.[94]

In Dada's December 7, 1919, performance, Grosz told overlapping stories that similarly lured and engaged the audience. Then, as his incomplete yarns began to confuse listeners, putting them in a state of anxious unease, Heartfield ran onto stage and interrupted with "a bloodcurdling jungle cry," as Hannah Höch remembered.[95] Here the men were replaying the disorienting battle of street agitators and public argumentation.

In the *BIZ*, on postcards, and in other print media, this fascination with spontaneous public speaking led to an iconography of the street agitator that Heartfield enthusiastically embraced. Published photographs and illustrations showed radical politicians such as Liebknecht (fig. 5.20) or ordinary *Volksredner* (people's orators) who seemed to display great talent. Many were depicted with their heads tipped back and their mouths open, presumably unleashing incendiary words on the frothing crowds below (fig. 5.21). Or the speaker's head might jut forward, his arm stretch outward or upward to complete the point (fig. 5.22). Or one might imagine, as Heartfield did in a large photo poster, the agitator cupping his hands to his mouth so as to better project his party line (fig. 5.23).[96] Dada's members regularly occupied this street-orator role when reading their manifestos and sound poetry at postrevolution events. In a 1920 self-portrait, Heartfield shows himself shouting



Fig. 5.20
Karl Liebknecht (with raised arm) speaking at a protest meeting at the Siegesalle in the Tiergarten, before January 15, 1918. Ullstein Bild/Granger Collection, New York.



Fig. 5.21
Karl Liebknecht speaking in front of the Ministry of Interior, December 12, 1918. Photo: Willy Römer. Ullstein Bild/Granger Collection, New York.



Fig. 5.22
Georg Ledebour speaking in front of the Berlin Palace, January 29, 1918. Ullstein Bild/ Granger Collection, New York.

over clenched fists, as if to indicate the emotional and heartfelt commitment to his political-aesthetic cause and its disruptive goals (fig. 1.6).

Heartfield, the short-tempered sounding board of social chaos, reveled in this iconography and realized its images on deeply affecting photographic prints (some of which are the first large-scale photo posters known to have been printed). The street agitator and orator became iconic figures, invoked repeatedly by the unrestrained Dadamonteur. "Down with art" and "down with bourgeois intellectualism," declared one of these pieces, making the anti-aesthetic case that he had already delivered to Kessler when lauding the "pulse of the time" over mediating self-expression (fig. 5.23). This poster, featuring the Dadamonteur's own likeness and hung at the First International Dada Fair, was seemingly imprinted directly by the sonorous cry it represents, rather than composed by the artist. It registers not just the light reflected off his countenance as the shutter snapped, but his audible howl. In fact, the photographic appearance of the clench-fisted Dadamonteur (fig. 1.6) hung below this poster and accompanied a text attributed to the nineteenth-century Belgian painter Antoine Wiertz: "Photography will one day suppress and replace all painting." This long-forecast displacement of fine art and traditional artistic expression, however, would only happen once the photograph could properly deliver the genuine "pulse of the time" and the multisensorial oration of those who called for it.[97]



Fig. 5.23
Robert Sennecke, view of photo poster by Heartfield at the Erste Internationale Dada-Messe (First International Dada Fair), 1920. Berlinische Galerie, Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst, Fotografie und Architektur.

Much like the text that screamed from Heartfield's animated figures two years earlier, the large photo poster (fig. 5.23) shows the words "*Dada ist Gross*" (Dada is great) shooting from Heartfield's mouth to fill the Dada Fair exhibition room, much as a street orator's voice filled city squares. Matthew Witkovsky has recently compared this and the other photo poster images to film stills and the text below (rather than within) them to intertitles, both of which serve to distill the sensation of cinema into static form.[98] The "*Gross*" in "*Dada ist Gross,*" of course, is also Grosz's original last name. The painter, therefore, was both an anti-artist and Dada itself. Meanwhile, the text just below Heartfield's mouth, pieced together like a ransom note, declares this orating monteur to be Dada's prophet, its seer, its sage of persuasion.

Count Kessler described Karl Liebknecht and his oratorical skills in almost precisely these same terms. On January 5, during the "Spartacus Uprising," Liebknecht addressed a large crowd before the police headquarters, which had been occupied by revolutionaries, a group keen to keep the recently dismissed USPD (independent socialist) police commissioner in his post. "Like a parson he intones his words slowly and expressively," wrote Kessler. Speaking from a balcony, a darkened room behind him,

> he was hidden from sight. . . . Only some of his words were intelligible, but his sing-song inflexion carried over the heads of the silent and attentive crowds right across [the Alexanderplatz]. When he ended there was a roar of approval, red flags were flourished, and thousands of hands and hats rose in the air. He was like an invisible priest of the revolution, a mysterious but sonorous symbol to which these people raised their eyes.[99]

Such oration, rendered nearly phantasmagorical by optical and sonorous effects, represented just about the only propaganda that the KPD could effectively deploy. But the party dominated this realm so completely that public agitators, depicted through rapid gestures of the lithographer's brush as dangerous rabble-rousers, came generally to be associated with the radical left (fig. 5.24). It was partly this sonorous symbol of the orating Liebknecht that Heartfield plied, activating otherwise static photographs with a screaming that recalled these often feared orators of revolution. Huge and loud, Heartfield's posters filled Dada's Fair with maddening advocacy for a new art of the pulsating and catalyzing moment.

But it was the whole of the revolution's mad public sphere that appealed to the Dadaists, for there one found the chaotic shouting and fighting of combatants, a physical struggle matched by the flogging reds of posters that carpeted every available space, clamoring for the attention of all who passed. Such physical, sonorous, and optical tumult mirrored the "lower" primal impulses that Heartfield later credited with unveiling essential truths about German society, truths that Wilhelmine decorum and control had masked. These were impulses he now sought to expose, mirror, and deploy as a striking provocation to renewed political upheaval.

What Heartfield tried to take from the revolutionary moment, at least from the vantage point of late 1919 and the first half of 1920, was not a lesson in the

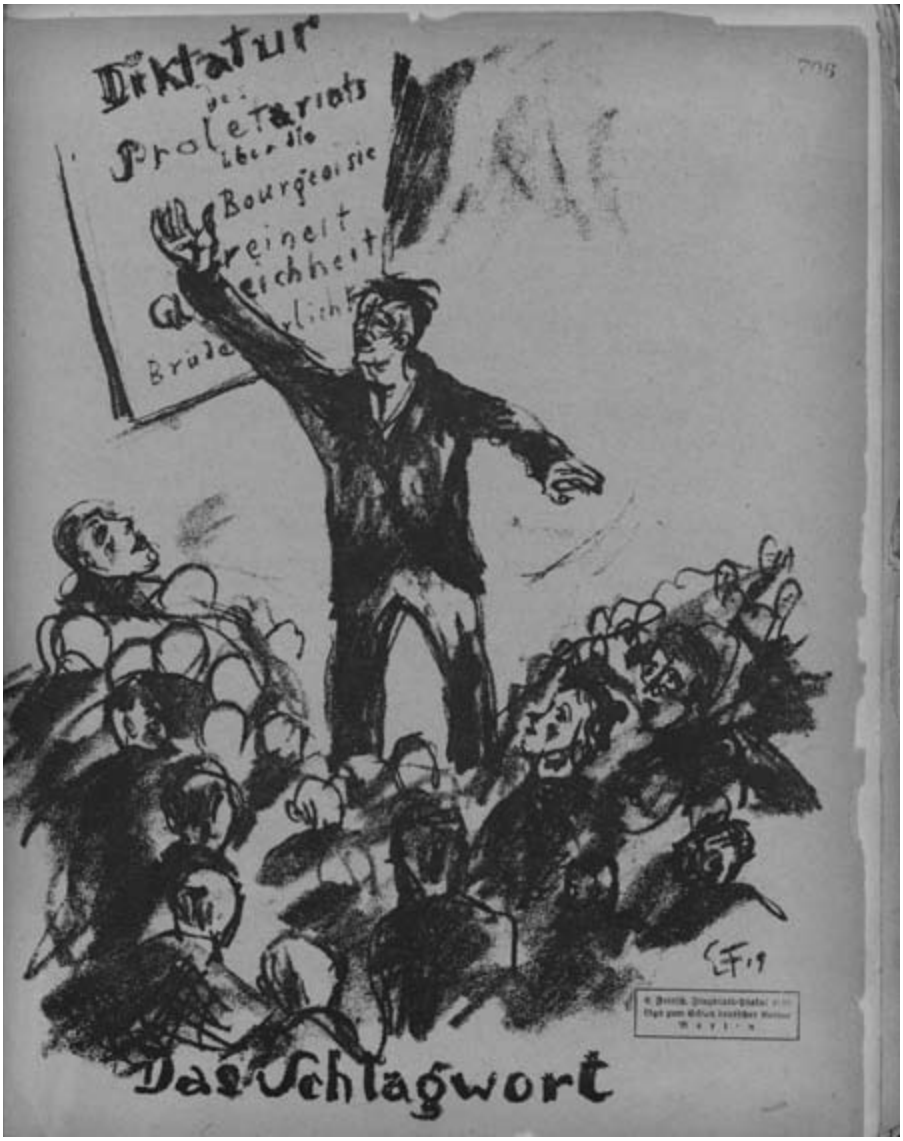


Fig. 5.24
E. Fritz, *Das Schlagwort* (*The Slogan*), from the feature *Der Hetzredner* (*The Orator of Hate*). Flugblatt-Plakat (broadsheet poster) printed by Die Liga zum Schutze der deutschen Kultur; reprinted in *Die Kultur der Reklame* 1, no. 6 (November 1919): NYPL page-stamped 706. Art & Architecture Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

enhancement of vision, as he had attempted on the cover of *Jedermann*, but almost the exact opposite: an assault on vision's capacity to perceive coherent meaning. The ability particularly of the Anti-Bolshevik League's propaganda to "burrow into our nerves and lodge in our imagination," as socialist art critic Lisbeth Stern described, represented the revolution's most striking aesthetic condition.[100] Like Dada's first performance and like Heartfield's animated films, this ever-inventive topsy-turvy "political face of the street" did not necessarily fashion dominant views. Instead it generated a shocking frisson of powerful solicitations that, as a whole, provoked the national nervous breakdown described by Hecht. This constituted a short-circuiting of perceptual coherence, an "unmediated upheaval of all being" so strong that coherent meaning was simply not possible, at least for the moment. As *Das Plakat's* Hans Friedeberger ultimately maintained, the agglomerated din of Germany's postwar

public sphere may have been disorienting. But precisely through this quality it constituted "the new means of expression" for a "new time."[101] Berlin Dada, fresh off its lessons from the war and keen to reprovoke a moribund revolution, reached the same conclusion. For Heartfield, this multisensory assault ultimately had to be waged in a new visual culture defined by an agitated form of photography.

THE FUNHOUSE MIRROR AND GERMAN COMMUNISM

After visiting Berlin Dada's "Great Fair," Adolf Behne wrote in the Independent Social Democratic newspaper *Die Freiheit* (*Freedom*) that "the art of the Dadaists can only be an unmediated expression of the age." Under postrevolutionary conditions, where "human beings are machines, culture is in tatters, education is conceit, spirit is brutality, the average is stupidity, and the master is the military," Dada shows the moment's "spiritual condition."[102] Leftist critic Lu Märtens similarly noted that Dadaism "is the mere reproduction of the given situation." Its pictures and assemblages were "exemplary" fragments taken from "World War—momentous times and counterrevolution" and "provided in the original." For Märtens, Dada's "mere reproduction" surpassed photography and approached a clarified original. She may have described the final products as satirical but only because "the body of capitalism" they so directly reproduced is "*in and of itself* satire." Here the bourgeois visitor who paid the Dada Fair's entry fee could "behold [his or her] own deformity in the mirror and the wax museum."[103]

Yet the KPD itself condemned Dada's new art in the sharpest of terms. The party's unofficial art critic, Gertrud Alexander, had long prized fine art as a cultural inheritance that would laudably serve any future proletarian society. In her eyes, Dada's new "paintings" were the "tasteless" and "barbaric" product of a "bourgeois literary clique" and, therefore, a kind of avant-garde garbage that not only failed to assist the "revolutionary worker's struggle," as the artists themselves claimed, but actually endangered that struggle through a nihilistic use of satire that reflected poorly upon the left as a whole. If anyone laughed before Berlin Dada's satire, Alexander claimed, it was the bourgeoisie, because in it "they smell . . . the flesh of their own flesh: bourgeois decadence."[104]

Alexander and the KPD had already found themselves furious with Heartfield and Grosz after what is now called the "Kunstlump" (Art Scab) affair. An aborted military coup, now known as the Kapp Putsch, had occurred in late March and early April of 1920 and met with great resistance among workers, who declared a general strike. The military's violent reaction to this opposition in Dresden resulted in damage to a Rubens painting in the city's famous Zwinger museum. Expressionist painter Oskar Kokoschka, then a professor in the Dresden art academy, penned a semisatirical open letter asking that the conflicting parties pick representatives to fight in distant fields and thereby save the eternal heritage of art, which Alexander went on to praise, from damage. Heartfield and Grosz responded with an open

letter in *Der Gegner* (*The Opponent*), a journal Malik had recently acquired. By their reckoning, this heritage served only the luxury of rich patrons and the delusion of poor viewers. They thus "welcomed" any bullets fired into the Zwinger rather than the houses of workers. Bourgeois art had to be displaced by a new art made by and for proletarians, reflecting their new reality.[105]

The men, of course, had their new "assembled" Dada pictures in mind, and they had been attending closely to new theories of proletarian culture emerging from Soviet Russia, particularly ideas penned by Alexandre Bogdanov. It was under this rubric that they envisioned their alternative "art of the machine," a "product" that directly reflected the "pulse of the time" and could be manufactured by anyone, as the foundation of a new proletarian culture.[106] For Grosz and Heartfield in particular, Soviet Russia provided a new aesthetic model, even if they knew next to nothing about the country's art, given Russia's isolation in an era of civil war.[107]

Fearing the party's ongoing association with rampaging anarchism, Gertrud Alexander dismissed these assertions as "art vandalism." Heartfield would confront this association of Dada's art with nihilism for the rest of his life, even as he developed a photomontage practice that the KPD haltingly learned to accept in the mid-1920s. Nonetheless, he continued to identify with the movement, even well into the 1960s, as a number of later interviews confirm. In fact, even in 1920, as the KPD rained down condemnation on him and Grosz, Heartfield was fully prepared to declare his adoption of Dada's goals, as his "Down with Art" photo poster and many of his most famous montages of the time make clear. The notion that he produced an accurate and provocative reflection of the time, free of the commercial and subjective associations that otherwise restrained fine art images, stood at the foundation of all his future work.

HEARTFIELD AND DADA

When, in the spring of 1920, Heartfield began clipping his way through magazine pages and photographic prints to produce his montage *The Tire Travels the World* (fig. 4.14), he was clearly thinking retrospectively about Berlin's Dada movement. The majority of his appropriated materials were just that: pieces of text and slices of images culled from the day's periodicals and flyers. But he also directed his scissors into his own body of work from the previous four years. As mentioned earlier, the central photograph of a screaming Raoul Hausmann likely comes from a portrait shoot Heartfield staged for all the Dadaists in July 1919. Beyond this, the letters *RIE*, enclosed by a semicircle at the top of the composition, and the upturned *EUE*, being crushed by the rolling tire, are bits of the phrases "X. Abend Variete" (tenth evening *variete*) and "Neue Jugend," both clipped from the June 1917 issue of *Die neue Jugend*. The fragment "Im Juni 1917" at the composition's bottom and the bicycle graphics just above that come from this same source. Significantly, these fragments lie snugly beneath cuttings that scream "Dada" or that name fellow Dadaists, a

formal ordering suggesting that Heartfield perceived his work for the movement as grounded in his pioneering production for *Die neue Jugend*'s last issue.

The ranting "Nein! Nein! Nein!" (at upper left), however, warrants particular notice. Heartfield clipped these words directly from Berlin Dada's first manifesto, penned by Richard Huelsenbeck for the April 12, 1918, lecture evening and signed by Grosz, among many others, but not by Heartfield or his brother.[108] Wieland, of course, was then deployed near the western front and, even if present, might not have been inclined to sign his name to a document attacking the literary expressionism then represented by his journal, *Die neue Jugend*. This, of course, had changed with the subsequent weekly issues of May and June 1917. For his part, Heartfield could have worried in the spring of 1918 that his open participation in such a spectacular and rambunctious movement would threaten his position as a film director working quietly, and with subversive intention, for the Foreign Service.

But now, in April 1920, Heartfield was prepared to sign this manifesto retroactively by setting a key passage of its text next to his own foundational typographic and photo work. He thereby configured this highly public picture, published on the cover of two separate periodicals, as a fragmented history of his own role in the movement.[109] Club Dada's constant effort to write its history, to guarantee that the movement would not become historically illegible, had likely motivated Heartfield to produce this lesson.[110] But what had Heartfield retroactively signed by appropriating these three words and the manifesto of which they were a part?

An answer may be partly found in the following fact: the declaration "Nein! Nein! Nein!" appears not once but twice near the outset of Huelsenbeck's manifesto. Between these two negations he shifts from describing an art generated by the moment to this new art's antipode: expressionism. The passage leading to this turn has since become the stuff of Dada legend and warrants full quotation:

> Art in its execution and direction is dependent on the time in which it lives, and artists are creatures of their epoch. The highest art will be that which in its conscious content presents the thousandfold problems of the day, the art which has visibly let itself be thrown by the explosions of the last week, which is forever gathering up its limbs after yesterday's crash. The best and most extraordinary artists will be those who with every hour snatch their tattered limbs out of the frenzied cataract of life and doggedly embrace the intellect of their time with bleeding hands and hearts.[111]

Here Huelsenbeck proclaims that Dada's new art not only takes its epoch as its subject, but that it does so by physically registering the moment's harried and fragmented conditions. Such an art, much like the artist's body itself, must absorb "the explosions of the last week" and regroup from "yesterday's crash." Only then, after reaching into "the frenzied cataract of life," can this art and the artist's body truthfully go about presenting "the thousandfold problems of the day."

Art and the artist's physique, Huelsenbeck proposes, must literally be imprinted

by the conditions of the day in order to reflect these circumstances accurately. By linking art and its producing body in this way, Huelsenbeck also suggests something else: that the "highest art" will be an impulsive and performative response to the moment's fragmenting percussion. This must have resonated powerfully with Heartfield who, as Elias Canetti later wrote, responded to stimuli as if they were acts of aggression. But running near the manifest's twice-repeated negations is an additional fold in Huelsenbeck's declaration that must have also appealed to Heartfield.

Immediately following his introductory paragraph, Huelsenbeck contrasts this new dynamic art with a sorely disappointing expressionism:

> Has Expressionism fulfilled our expectation of such an art that will reconfirm our most vital concerns
>
> **No! No! No!**
>
> Have the Expressionists fulfilled our expectations for an art that burns the essence of life into our flesh?
>
> **No! No! No!**[112]

Expressionism failed, he then explains, because it retreated from its times and turned inward toward the artist's tormented consciousness in order to conduct an irrelevant "propaganda for the soul."

In his condemnation of expressionism, Huelsenbeck vividly outlines the impact of Dada's new art on its audience, much as he earlier outlines the impact of the times on that art. In orienting itself toward the moment's common and essential concerns, each of Dada's "products" not only subjects itself to the day's violent imprint but acts as a medium conveying the force of "yesterday's crash" so directly that it "burns the essence of life into our flesh." This scorching of the body by the moment's tumult works with the logic of the direct imprint rather than the indirect composition, the subjective reproduction. Dada, in other words, already operated through a realist paradigm defined by a vastly expanded understanding of photography, even before Heartfield helped realize this relationship in montage.

Huelsenbeck's was, however, an expanded understanding of this paradigm that seemed uniquely suitable to the chaotic experiences and transformed perceptual conditions of wartime and postwar modernity. In this expanded notion lay an economy of relationships so unceasingly direct that terms such as perception, representation, observed conditions, and observing subject dissolved into an enormous sphere of communal sensation. It was, among other things, this public sphere renewed by an expanded photographic paradigm that Heartfield signed onto when he appropriated Huelsenbeck's string of negations from the 1918 manifesto. His return to photography was now complete.

6

FROM THE SHOP WINDOW TO THE BOOK COVER

1920–1929

BY LATE 1923 THE MALIK VERLAG HAD PROSPERED ENOUGH TO OPEN A LUXURIOUS showroom near Berlin's Potsdamer Platz.[1] The tireless efforts of Herzfelde, Heartfield, and Grosz to sell literature and art had rapidly succeeded in making their press one of the Weimar era's most prominent publishers of books. Malik ostentatiously announced this achievement with a series of publicity photographs for its 1925 catalog of publications. Shot inside the new store, these pictures highlight movable shelves, the gentle repose of browsing customers, luxurious oak reading desks, and, of course, the company's extensive stock of left-wing tomes (fig. 6.1). In contrast to this interior serenity, the sidewalk outside the showroom quickly became a notorious site for kerfuffles and altercations (fig. 6.2).[2]

It was from this sidewalk that one could see the frequently provocative window displays carefully arranged by in-house designer John Heartfield.[3] Over the four years that Malik occupied this high-end storefront, Heartfield's handiwork caught



Fig . 6.1
John Heartfield, Frans Masereel, and Malik-Buchhandlung, Malik Verlag bookstore, interior, 1925. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (91-B35375). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Fig. 6.2
John Heartfield, Frans Masereel, and Malik-Buchhandlung, Malik Verlag bookstore, exterior. The upper photo is a publicity shot taken in 1925. The bottom photo was purportedly taken the previous year, during the "10 Years War" display. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (91-B35375). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Fig. 6.3
Väter und Söhne (*Fathers and Sons*), 1924. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

the attention of passersby, who often stopped, looked, and flew into a rage.[4] Throngs of feuding pedestrians regularly amassed before his windows, even spilling from the sidewalk into Köthener Street, where traffic was forced to a halt. Outright acts of intimidation against the publisher also occurred. In April 1924 a right-wing vandal ominously splashed a bucket of blood-red paint across the building's rusticated stone façade, protesting a book that Heartfield's display prominently promoted.

Despite these regular set-tos, however, the Malik staff must have been surprised by the iconoclast who stormed into their store in late September 1924. Red with rage, the "menacing and roaring *völkisch* type let it be known that the crown prince himself" demanded that a poster hanging as part of an antiwar display in the shop's windows be removed immediately. As the KPD's daily paper *Die rote Fahne* reported soon thereafter, "he demonstrated that he was prepared to rip it away himself, and it was only through the courageous and level-headed intervention of the bookstore personnel that he was held at bay."[5] The centrally displayed poster toward which the roaring patriot lunged has since become famous as John Heartfield's first agitational-propaganda photomontage (fig. 6.3).

Likely captioned *Väter und Söhne* (*Fathers and Sons*), the photomontaged narrative shows prepubescent Potsdam cadets marching toward a colossal Prussian general who, fully decorated and upright, stands prepared to lead his youthful retinue into adult marching and eventual battle. The montage measures the ultimate destination of these cadets not in the shredded corpses found among Heartfield's antiwar display of frontline "horror photographs" (originally arrayed below the poster), but in an allegorical rack of skeletons that regresses into the darkness of premature death. Here hang both the expired sons and the dead fathers of future cadets who will also march as cannon fodder to—as Heartfield's image suggests—certain slaughter.

As this remarkable composition demonstrates, the photomonteur had begun applying the rhetorical tools of allegory and narrative to an ever-lower count of appropriated photographic fragments. The resulting image is clearly and forcefully legible, with its figures laid out precisely along receding orthogonal lines. The composition thus suggests the unfolding of time across illusionistic space, a conceit that, in his full-on Dada montages, Heartfield had steadfastly refused, preferring instead to focus on the multiple layers of now. Economical, legible, and strikingly to the point, Heartfield's new montage raised tempers based on its content as well as its form. It is just this interwoven stress on sparse, clear design and a politically and emotionally potent message that defines this montage as agitational-propaganda. For it agitated with the force of a street orator, exciting the motivation or disgust of its pedestrian audience, while it also advertised Malik's antiwar message, efficiently disseminating this propaganda to just about anyone who gazed upon it. Rather than assault consciousness with a dismantling of coherent meaning's very possibility, this poster now sought to stimulate and shape perception with a carefully launched and detonated message. Considering this dramatic transformation from his recent Dada work, one might reasonably ask, why had Heartfield simplified his still powerful montage so completely that it now seemed fully part of a political campaign as much as an innovative art movement?[6]

On this question, the Soviet avant-garde polymath Sergei Tret'iakov had no doubt. Writing from the vantage point of a 1936 Moscow heavily strained by Stalin's show trails and purges, this former editor of the avant-garde journal *Novyi-Lef* credited Heartfield's sudden "laconic" orderliness to the artist's strict party discipline. "Heartfield's Dada phase was brief," the Russian confidently assured:

He soon stopped squandering the gunpowder of his creative flashes in the fireworks of non-objectivity, and his works instead became precise shots. Heartfield became a member of the German Communist Party at its founding, and from that moment on his montages became inseparable from his work within the Party. . . . The Party taught Heartfield to see the true enemy. It dictated the direction of his production. It taught him to feel his proletarian audience, to speak with it in its own language and to communicate to it through the language of simplicity.[7]

According to this account, Heartfield essentially cleaned up his messy Dada misfires by observing the KPD injunction to speak with proletarian simplicity. The results would include not just his 1924 *Väter and Sohne* montage but the subsequent *Rote Fahne* covers, party posters, and *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* compositions for which he is best known today. Among these, the confusing and blunt shock of Dada-inspired montage appeared only sparingly.

But the problem of timing forces a difficult wrinkle in Tret'iakov's account. As discussed in chapter 5, Heartfield joined the KPD not long after its retroactive founding on January 1, 1919, and his magnificently ruptured Dada photomontage followed, rather than preceded, this investiture by roughly eleven months. To make Tret'iakov's proposed evolution even more fraught, Heartfield actually collaborated on the relatively straightforward photomontages in *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball* well before "squandering the gunpowder of his creative flashes" on his later Dada works. Could it be, then, that an explanation for his post-Dada transformation lies—at least in part—elsewhere?

The fact that *Väter and Sohne* appeared in Malik's window and not under the KPD's roof offers an important clue. So too does a related fact: shortly after the close of the First International Dada Fair in late August 1920, Wieland Herzfelde decided that political tracts such as those printed in *Die Pleite* and *Der Gegner* should fall under the purview of the KPD. Malik, he reasoned, should instead concentrate its effort on the publication of novels, for the party's hostility to the press's early post-Dada output demonstrated that the institution would never become a sponsor of aesthetically progressive literary art. This decision, however, posed a specific set of design challenges for the press's house artist. As Wieland later recalled:

In 1921, as our Press began publishing novels, it required particularly expressive [*aussagekräftig*] jackets and book covers. These surfaces were meant to prompt not only the few leftist booksellers but also those of a different opinion to display our new publications and reprints in their shop windows. Therefore the books had to be attractive at first sight and at the same time have an agitational effect. For we felt that even those who did not buy a book should be influenced by its content as expressed over the cover.[8]

In essence, the books' covers had to fire the kind of efficient, "precise shots" described by Tret'iakov. What Herzfelde lists here as the rules of leftist bookselling would also have applied to Heartfield's 1924 display in Malik's shop window. There,

too, the placard at the center had to "prompt" passersby of various opinions, "to be attractive at first sight and at the same time have an agitational effect." Could it be, therefore, that in addition to the KPD, Heartfield's tutelage in this "language of simplicity" had a second but no less rigorous master in the lowly book cover? This chapter will suggest that the answer is yes.

POST-DADA TRANSFORMATIONS

Heartfield designed his covers to sell books. But he developed these images as part of a deeply political aesthetic project in which the books played an important role. This larger venture sought a distinctly proletarian art whose pictures and texts would arise from the real interests (and even contributions) of the working poor. They would communicate in straightforward and easy intelligible terms borrowed from such things as political manifestos, journalism, and even penny novels. This new proletarian art and literature was inspired by the same Russian *Proletkult* that had impressed Dada's montage artists in the prior months. But now Herzfelde, along with playwright Erwin Piscator and a handful of activists, transformed this interest into a systematic program of literature and plays that developed over the remainder of the Weimar period. Heartfield's covers formed the first long-term pictorial realization of this new undertaking in proletarian art.

Just as this effort gathered pace, however, Heartfield also signed his name to a September 1920 manifesto that helped determine his new direction. Entitled "The Laws of Painting," this relatively terse statement, signed also by Grosz, Hausmann, and fellow Dadaist Rudolf Schlichter, and saved by Hannah Höch in her comprehensive archive, advocated a return of this traditional medium to its former dominance. This distinctly non–Dada-sounding transformation could occur, however, only if painters observed certain "laws" that subordinated the expression of individuality to a "universal" and "collective" spirit. In imposing such restraints, the manifesto explained, "we are introducing historical materialism into painting."[9] This was a curious document that mixed a lingering fascination with Russian constructivism (which the signatories still knew little about) with rather precise tips on the rendering of perspective and shadow, and on the correct color scale.[10] But it nonetheless demonstrated the signatories' effort to seek a post-Dada rapprochement with Europe's fine art heritage while still maintaining Dada's deep engagement with politics and everyday mass culture. The hallmarks here were clarity, provocation, and political resonance, characteristics that typified Heartfield's images over the next decade.

These hallmarks also came to dominate Grosz's work. "I am trying once more to give an absolutely realistic image of the world," the painter explained two months later. "I try to be comprehensible to *every* human being."[11] To achieve such lucidity, the manifesto suggested the use of mathematics, stereometry, and the study of photographs, all of which could help painters dispassionately render illusionistic

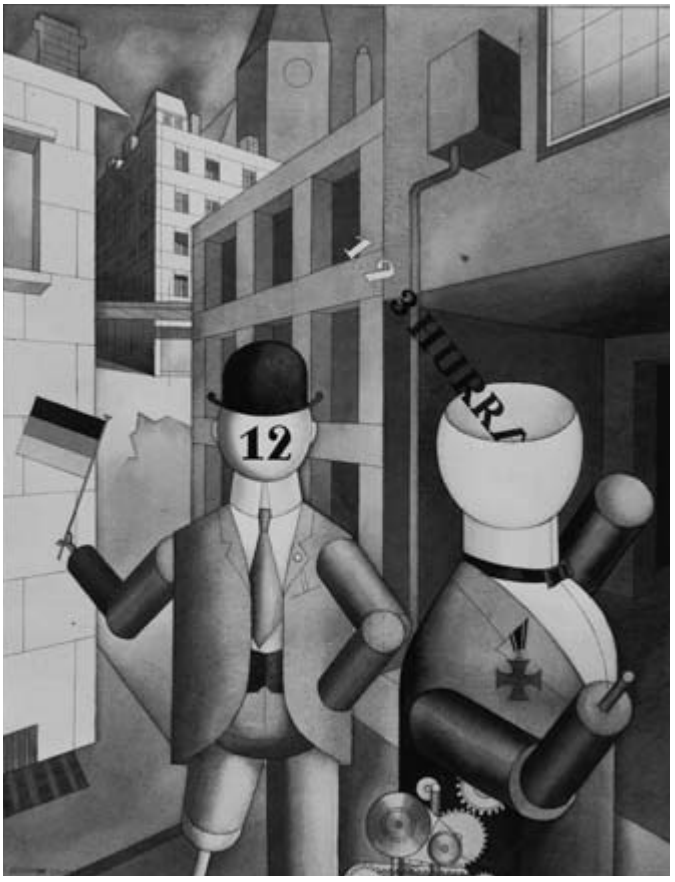


Fig. 6.4
George Grosz, *Republikanische Automaten* (*Republican Automatons*), 1920. Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA.
© 2011 The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art.
© 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

space and proper figures without, as Grosz later explained, "spiritual, cabalistic humbug and metaphysics."[12] The models proposed by "The Laws of Painting" were nonetheless the mystical artists of Italy's Pittura Metafisica, men such as Carlo Carrà and Giorgio de Chirico. The manifesto's writers, it seems, wished to stress the deeply receding spaces into which they, as Dadaists, had recently placed their montaged fragments. But they would replace the montaged figures of those works with new ones rendered by a compass and other drafting devices.

Although the signatories never published their manifesto, all but Heartfield began composing paintings and watercolors that followed these guidelines, as did Hannah Höch. The results were distinctly Italian. In these pictures one saw deeply receding urban spaces occupied by strange assortments of robots, tailor's dummies, and machines, most of which represented abstract human types such as the bride or the urban citizen (fig. 6.4). Where Dadaist photomontage aimed to shock and disorient vision, these works deployed a carefully engineered objectivity that merged painterly traditions and drafting tools to convey "the essential" of the epoch in "a language that could raise the optical imagination of the masses to clearness [*Eindeutigkeit*]." The goal was not just to shape optical perception but to orient it toward radical politics. Many of the resulting works, however, were deeply ambiguous, their

meanings far from immediately clear. Nonetheless, they evince a reconceptualized desire by the artists to make art relevant to the lives of everyday citizens.

An important factor behind this transformation remained the KPD's fevered condemnation of Dada's montage as "bourgeois decadence," along with its unwavering praise for the "cultural inheritance" of the bourgeoisie—just what Heartfield and Grosz had attacked in their *Kunstlump* letter. As *Rote Fahne* art critic Gertrud Alexander repeatedly maintained, true art, no matter its origin, conveyed eternal values that could edify anyone, including the proletariat. By engaging once more with painting, this still politicized group of former Dadaists seems to have been addressing that critique.

Yet their ongoing interest in nonacademic, deindividualized "constructions," photography, and trained vision betrays something else that the KPD continued to condemn with deep ferocity: political propaganda made under the rubric of art. Grosz, for example, felt that his semimechanically rendered tailor's dummies and deeply receding orthogonal lines discarded "the cult of individuality and personality" in favor of the proletarian's collective experience. Writing in August 1920, he asserted that his art would now "open men's eyes that they may see their actual relationship to their environment," and show "the oppressed the true face of their oppressor."[13] As he further explained in November, "the sobriety and clarity of the engineer's drawing" that he now used as a model would "build an entirely real platform" in which "man is no longer shown as an individual with psychological subtleties, but as a collectivistic, almost mechanistic concept."[14]

Unfortunately, Grosz's new paintings, his first since *Deutschland ein Wintermärchen*, established little clear relation between their austere form and collective class identity. Instead, his "Republican Automatons" and alienated city dwellers enacted the same satire that had made him famous over the previous two years. After roughly nine months of pursuing this approach, he returned to his well-trod graphic parody, which continued to earn him tremendous notoriety. What remains critically important about these paintings and their aftermath, however, is that they demonstrated Grosz's effort to shape his art to accommodate the demands of clarity regularly associated with political messaging. For him, however, *Tendenzkunst* (tendentious or partisan art), as it was increasingly called, would be realized on a terrain largely defined by the traditional terms of fine art.

Heartfield, by contrast, would soon realize *Tendenzkunst* within the sphere of applied art, where he had been trained and where propaganda and its conjoined twin, advertising, had always found a comfortable home.[15] Although he had signed "The Laws of Painting," this art form had long since disappeared from his practice, and he would never return to it. But his subsequent work did reflect the manifesto's rhetoric of pictorial simplification. It was at this point in his professional life, near the end of 1920, that he and Grosz slowly began pulling away from each other to forge separate careers. Though they remained personally close until Grosz's 1933 emigration to New York, Heartfield now found new tasks and new collaborators.

THE PROLETARIAN THEATER

A month after he signed his name to the "Laws of Painting" manifesto, the now famous Dadamonteur began a new professional peregrination by agreeing to design stage sets for playwright Erwin Piscator's recently inaugurated and forever itinerant Proletarian Theater. This move made professional sense considering Heartfield's stage work for the Schall und Rauch cabaret a few months earlier (as noted in chapter 4). But the new backdrops he would produce for Piscator performed a different task than the cabaret sets. These designs were hastily composed and proffered straightforward pedagogical lessons behind the professional and amateur actors they helped position. Rather than decorate the performance space or transform it into a faraway time or location, as was traditional, his backdrops—in one case, an enormous map—"made the political meaning of the play's setting clear from the very geographical situation," as Piscator later explained.[16]

Heartfield's work thus slotted itself into a form of theater that sought a far more radical reinvention of a traditional art form than the new paintings of Grosz, Hausmann, Höch, and Schlichter. For the first time since 1915, Heartfield found himself composing public images outside of Grosz's direct orbit. And just as significantly, this new context immersed him in literary debates rather than painterly ones.[17] This would be an important advent. For it was around Piscator's theater that new ideas about "proletarian art" now gestated. These ideas, in turn, led to a type of literature that Malik developed into a line of books, whose jackets Heartfield was soon charged with designing.

Piscator first entered the Malik circle when he met Wieland Herzfelde in northern France during the war. It was 1917, and the poet-solider had been newly transferred from his hospital post to work as a radio report transcriber, thanks to Count Kessler's intervention. Piscator was his instructor and, together, they soon began working in a soldier's theater.[18] Once the men returned to Berlin, Herzfelde introduced Piscator to his friends and a series of close relationships developed among them.[19] It was through the Malik Verlag that Piscator ultimately introduced his new Proletarian Theater to the larger public; *Der Gegner* published an entire issue on the subject, and its pages also served as the theater's playbill in October 1920.[20] Herzfelde's wife herself sold copies of the issue to the audience before performances.[21] It is most likely through this close connection with Malik that Heartfield was enlisted as the set designer.

The idea of a theater specifically designed for proletarian audiences originated in the late nineteenth century with the *Volkstheater* movement, an important part of the separate culture built by the SPD when Bismark's antisocialist legislation forced the organization into cultural autonomy, as partly discussed in chapter 1. This "People's Theater" is closely associated with Franz Mehring, who, on the left of the nineteenth-century SPD, saw the political and intellectual emancipation of the poor as closely linked. But this was not to be a liberation grounded in cutting-edge forms. Rather, it involved exposing proletarian audiences to great works of art and

thereby weaning them from the kitschy fare of penny dreadfuls and comic theater that generally defined the cultural consumption of the poor. Mehring's goal, that is, was not necessarily to invent a new form of theater for the poor, but to educate workers in the highest cultural goods of the dominant culture. Thus charged, the various *Volkstheater* founded in Germany's greatest cities largely clung to traditional, even classical, fare.[22]

Piscator's Proletarian Theater, by contrast, took its inspiration from Alexandre Bogdanov's Soviet *Proletkult*, which had also excited Heartfield and Grosz to write their *Kunstlump* letter. Here the goal was largely to bypass high art and its "eternal values," developing instead an art based in "the collective consciousness" and life experiences of the working class, as Bogdanov explained in one of his most important studies. This same Russian text had been translated and published in Germany in 1919.[23] For Piscator, this charge meant straightforward and clearly intelligible political education—a far more didactic approach than Grosz took to his new paintings. As the playwright later explained, his theater was "conceived from the start . . . as an agitprop group with the sole aim of developing class consciousness and proletarian solidarity for the struggle ahead."[24] Therefore, as his original manifesto in *Der Gegner* proclaimed, "the directors of the *Proletarisches Theater* must aim for simplicity of expression, lucidity of structure, and a clear effect on the feelings of a working-class audience. Subordination of all artistic aims to the revolutionary goals: conscious emphasis on and cultivation of the idea of the class struggle."[25] These agitational and propagandistic goals, oriented toward emotional stimulation and didactic message dissemination, also defined the literature that Heartfield's book covers soon wrapped.

The plays staged by Piscator's theater were heavy-handed affairs. *Russia's Day* (*Russlands Tag*), written on extremely short notice by a Hungarian who spoke poor German, warns of a right-wing military coup and glorifies the new Soviet motherland.[26] In it, performers play clearly defined types representing broad reactionary political forces. World Capital, "dressed as a giant moneybag with a stockbroker's top hat," begins with the following address: "I am World Capital. Silence! [*to "the Diplomat"*] Have you given order for force to be used ruthlessly against anyone who infringes the sacred right of property? Speak up!" The Diplomat answers: "Your Majesty's power embraces the entire world that has been bestowed upon man. But your Majesty's omnipotence is gravely threatened by the masses of the workers in their struggle for power."[27]

Piscator confessed nine years later that this was "crude, propagandistic caricature" that was more "sensational than enlightening" and "calculated to provoke indignation and class feeling" while also eliciting audience participation."[28] These are, of course, all affective goals typical of agitprop, particularly as the KPD soon came to define it. The institution's 1925 party conference, for instance, devoted an entire day of its six-day program to the meaning and production of agitational propaganda. During the procedings, a member of the Moscow-based Communist International rose and, echoing Lenin's own ideas on the subject, declared that "pro-

paganda is the generous work of education that introduces Marxist-Leninist theory and its basic elements into the heads of party members." Agitation, by contrast, was an "awakening of interest" in this education, a passionate "use of all means to draw the worker out of passivity." Only in full coordination could agitation and propaganda function effectively.[29]

Drawing as much on Bogdanov as Lenin, Piscator explained that his theater's intention was not to "provide the proletariat with art but . . . conscious propaganda." To that end, the plays sought a radical retraining (*Umlernen*) of audience experience, a breaking through the wall of performed illusion that could make the play an actual part of "life praxis," as theorist Peter Bürger later described the historical avant-garde's goals.[30] Audiences would often break into political arguments during the performances, becoming active participants rather than passive viewers.[31] This was not illusion but a real-life event, a participatory affair meant to structure the experience and memory of the recent revolution. One reviewer remarked on the "curious way in which reality and the play merge into one another. You often don't know whether you are in a theater or in a public meeting, you feel you ought to intervene and help, or say something" because "everything that is taking place on the stage concerns [the spectator]."[32]

Heartfield's stage sets worked in a correspondingly didactic and provocative manner. For *Russia's Day*, as Piscator remembered, "the stage was enclosed by drapes with a map of Europe as a backdrop. There was a turnpike painted with the flags of Europe on each side of the stage, one with the placard 'East,' the other with 'West' above it."[33] Heartfield thus placed the hard-edged character types on Europe's political stage, where their actions defined geographic dominance and rebellious resistance. As Capital and Military seek to squelch uprisings by the Worker (of Germany and Hungary, where there had also been a short-lived revolution), Russia offers guidance or threat in the form of a colossal presence on the map's right side. Herzfelde remembered there being a shining red sun above "the East."[34]

The map highlighted Moscow as a site of hope; Budapest, Berlin, and Munich as sites of revolution; and London as the headquarters of "imperialist reaction." Heartfield's goal, it seems, was to wrap the performance not in a decorative or illusionistic fictional space, but, consistent with Piscator's goals, in a thematic rubric that outlined the historical significance of the unfolding performance. He articulated this conceit in the terms of geography, showing the "revolutionary" threat as a great Russian mass confronting the smaller countries to its west.

Heartfield created, in other words, a display window that framed the play as a provocative *tableau vivant*. But rather than biblical types attending the miraculous birth or the dolorous passion, as was typical in baroque *tableaux vivants*, here stood political types in the European theater of revolution. These figures became part of a seamless didactic assembly in which the audience intervened not with mournful wailing, but with argument. They were, as Walter Benjamin explains of their baroque precedents, generalized bodies easily opened to allegorical readings, in this case "capitalism" or "revolution." Although living humans, their stillness or

staggered movement transformed the body into text and a narrative into optically based spectacle.[35] With his stage set for *Russia's Day*, Heartfield eased the reading of this narrative-impoverished pageant by merging geographic and proscenium space, thereby allowing the play's meaning to be read over backdrop and stage surface simultaneously. Grosz had sought much the same in his insistently linear, deeply receding paintings from the same time. This work with narrative and distilled types would also form a critical part of the monteur's new book covers.

One must recognize the challenges involved in assembling these *tableaux*. Piscator's company performed in union halls and cheap festival parlors that stank of yesterday's beer and wayward urine. Everything from Heartfield's sets to the stage lights had to be transported in carts. The artist was clearly prepared to experiment wildly under the demands of this new sort of theater.

Perhaps not surprisingly, and as it had with Dada, *Die rote Fahne* roundly dismissed Piscator's effort. Gertrud Alexander, an acolyte of Fritz Mehring, complained in an unsigned editorial about the Proletarian Theater's rejection of art in favor of persuasion. "We read in the program," she explained, "that this is not supposed to be art but propaganda." And propaganda, as she understood it, was a distinctly unaesthetic and straightforwardly educative expression of "proletarian communistic ideas" in a "colorful and pithy [*plakativ*—referring to *Plakat*, or poster] style." This, she declared, was the opposite of art, a "sacred thing" that can "liberate the spirit and make one free." Again referring to the program, Alexander continued, "The intention is not to 'enjoy art.' To this we would like to say: In that case, why choose the name theater? Let us call a duck a duck and label it: propaganda. The name theater commits you to art and to an artistic level of performance!"[36]

Such criticism stung the Malik circle and those working around Piscator, given that the institution whose constituency they wished to serve rejected their efforts. Many in Berlin's politicized avant-garde, including Piscator himself, soon fled the KPD because of this antipathy. But two significant developments arose from what would prove to be an extended conflict on the radical left regarding art and propaganda. First, Herzfelde realized that the KPD would never promote a new "proletarian" literary art that it viewed as unartistic propaganda, and therefore he resolved to do so himself. He undertook to transform the strategies of the Proleterian Theater into a literature that similarly worked with absolutely contemporary issues under the rubric of agitprop, that leaned on clear and legible types, and that provoked indignation at the real challenges faced by the poor. It would avoid the creative flourishes of *belles lettres* and take the objectivity of contemporary journalism as a model. At best, it would be authored by nonprofessional writers. This was a form of literature that soon came to be called reportage. Not coincidentally, some of Malik's first publications in this vein were plays that had been performed by Piscator's theater.

Second, an increasingly clear but largely unspoken division developed between left-oriented fine art, intended for proletarian audiences, and agitational propaganda (agitprop), meant for the politically radical mass media. Although "The

Laws of Painting" was never published, it nonetheless characterized the effort of artists like Grosz, Otto Dix, Otto Nagel, Lea Grundig-Langer, Grethe Jürgens, Otto Griebel, and many others, who sought to transform the traditional media of painting, drawing, and printing into an art about, for, and in many cases by the poor. This they largely achieved not through the mimetically clear "constructivist" techniques proposed by the manifesto, but through an "objective" realism that brutally revealed the harsh reality of Germany's poor. These works, which came to be associated with the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity), generally appeared in traditional gallery and exhibition venues and were popularized in Russian-financed illustrated journals published in Germany. In turn, the first foreign exhibition on Russian soil since the 1917 Revolution, the "First General German Exhibition," heavily featured this new, gritty German realism.[37] Although these pictures generally presented themselves under the rubric of fine art, and thus were generally acceptable to the early KPD, party critics and commentators in Moscow slowly began complaining that they focused excessively on misery and offered few positive models or causes for hope.[38]

Meanwhile, agitprop—dissociated from the category of art in the party's eyes—was enthusiastically embraced by the KPD in 1922. The party soon produced particularly inventive examples of this work in what became the Agitprop Abteilung (Agitprop Department) of its Central Committee, the same division in which Heartfield eventually worked as a contributor.[39] Because the KPD and its advocates valued images made in this mode as emotionally fueled tools for persuasion rather than as "sacred art," the amateurs and professionals who produced this material had relatively wide latitude to fashion pictures and texts in whatever way they felt would be most successful. This worked to Heartfield's benefit. While Grosz continued to produce largely what the party considered art, the budding monteur began generating applied images that fell under the rubric of agitprop. He could therefore quietly transform his Dada photomontage into book covers without incurring the wrath of the KPD, which had earlier demanded that photomontaging Dadaists keep their "hands off art."[40] These conditions enabled him to make his most valuable contribution to interwar European culture: political propaganda based in the aesthetic invention of Germany's avant-garde.

HEARTFIELD THE APPLIED ARTIST

In late 1920 Heartfield and Grosz spent some of their last months engaged in intense and varied collaboration on applied art. Near the end of the year, they even sent out a New Year's card that, partly tongue-in-cheek, announced their new design firm, the Grosz-Heartfield-Werke, or Grosz-Heartfield Plants. It sported the following sales pitch:

George Grosz and John Heartfield wish you a happy New Year for 1921 and they henceforth offer their services in the execution of theater stage sets in any style, costume designs, artistic ballet decorations (together with choreographic direction), pantomime and season review sets, film designs following the newest American techniques. Artistic consultation for cabaret and film. Further: illustration, caricature, portraiture, landscape, still life, art history, curating of entire exhibitions, posters of any style, original John Heartfield print arrangement. Promptest execution of any job particularly of **rush art orders**. Excellent execution in any art style guarantied: expr[essionism], futur[ism], Dada, meta-mech[anical]. *Specialty: artistic theater, film and print consulting.*

This dizzying assortment of services essentially recounted the multimedia experience the pair had acquired over the last five years. Embraced were the innumerable styles and manners in which they had worked, including "American" techniques. The flyer thus shifted the men's position away from the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) of their Dada phase and toward the *Gesamtkünstler* (total artist) of applied projects. Entire productions, they now claimed, could be completed under their direction. A movie or play might be supplied with sets, costumes, and choreography in any number of "styles," from Dada to its antithesis, expressionism. Meanwhile, Heartfield's signature print arrangement, or typographic design, might determine the playbill's look, and images fashioned for the cinematic or theatrical production might land in an art exhibition curated by the duo.

The only aspect of this otherwise total coverage they might leave to other hands would be screenplay or script writing and the acting itself. This seems to have been precisely the case with a film the men agreed to make for the Colonna Film Company in October 1921. Although never completed, this intriguing feature was supposed to introduce the "fundamentals of the theory of relativity" through film animation.[41] Around the same time, however, Heartfield, in his position at the Ufa studios, completed a short feature of his own that remains his only surviving film: the first part of a documentary about the Hohl glass manufacturing process.[42] To add yet another job to this pile of applied art tasks, Heartfield also seems to have been the head of facilities at the famous Deutsches Theater in 1921.[43]

Soon, however, he would become even busier than he regularly claimed to be. One of the few new projects Heartfield subsequently initiated with Grosz was *Der Knüpple*, a monthly humor magazine sponsored by the KPD and closely resembling *Die Pleite* (which saw its final issues in 1924) in both look and content. This satirical serial, which ran from 1923 to 1927, involved difficult negotiations with the party, whose members sometimes perceived the magazine as "cliquey," self-referential, and difficult to understand.[44] Moreover, because print quality remained low, Heartfield avoided publishing photomontages in its pages until its last year. Despite these complications, *Der Knüppel* eventually brought Heartfield to work directly in the KPD's burgeoning Agitprop Department, but not until 1926. In the interim, the photomonteur increasingly concentrated his efforts on the Malik Verlag.

MALIK COVERS

Wieland Herzfelde's promotion of Piscator's Proletarian Theater was not limited to his special October 1920 issue of *Der Gegner*. The following year, he published seven of its performed or projected plays as part of the twelve-volume series Revolutionary Stage Works, authored by writers such as Franz Jung, Erich Mühsam, and a new American contributor, Upton Sinclair.[45] Also in 1921, Herzfelde initiated the Red Novel Series, whose authors, according to a Malik prospect, "are seized by the problems of our time, and express these difficulties." Much like the playwrights of his other series, "they find the courage to be tendentious."[46] Herzfelde's commitment to developing a proletarian art had turned into outright sponsorship as he transformed Malik's production to focus on such literature. Over the course of the next three years, the journals and political tracts on which the press had partly built its postwar success slowly disappeared, as Malik became primarily a publisher of novels.

Herzfelde had learned an important lesson from the KPD's sharp response to Piscator's theater and Dada's art: the party would always refuse to acknowledge a relation between radical politics and radical aesthetics.[47] Affirming this linkage, he realized, would have to be Malik's task. A number of significant political and aesthetic tracts nonetheless followed, including Herzfelde's own *Society, the Artist, and Communism* (1921), which had been serialized in *Der Gegner*, and Georg Lukacs's tremendously influential *History and Class Consciousness* (1923).[48] But a legal struggle in late 1923 over Malik's rights to publish Lenin's writings further dissuaded Herzfelde from issuing such nonfiction.[49] Furthermore, the KPD's ever-changing leadership and policies were at best mercurial and, in many cases, hostile to members perceived as not toeing the party line sufficiently. Herzfelde and his Malik circle (many of whom had joined splinter parties such as the Communist Workers Party) consistently counted among these renegades.[50] Political tracts and treatises, Herzfelde therefore reasoned, should remain within the party's purview, while Malik would publish what the party declined to consider: art. The Malik Verlag would soon become one of Germany's most famous publishers based precisely on these literary volumes and, in part, on George Grosz's subsequent portfolios. The press's success, however, was in no way guaranteed. Because it was at base a radical political publisher, its early commitment to "proletarian" literature posed a distinct set of marketing problems that would push Heartfield to transform his photomontage technique.

Being independent from the party, Malik lacked its financial support and, just as importantly, direct access to what would become the KPD's extended chain of bookshops. The press, therefore, would have to sustain itself almost entirely through small-scale sales. With only one shop of its own, opening in 1923, and no book subscription service, which was a popular arrangement at the time, most of its sales would have to be made through private, and often politically conservative, booksellers. Many of these merchants were hostile to Malik's new literature. Making circumstances even tougher was the press's dearth of significant money for advertis-

ing. Herzfelde therefore had to trust that potential customers would fall back on the age-old vice of judging a book by its cover. Here is where Heartfield's design talent became essential for Malik's survival.

He now had to employ his increasingly cunning design skills to make the "wallflower that nobody took notice of, the dust jacket," as Lilly Becher, onetime editor of the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung*, later put it, perform two potentially conflicting tasks.[51] It should operate as an alluring wrapper that would attract buyers and, at best, earn the volume a spot in the bookseller's shop window, the publishing world's most important stage. It should also function as a political poster, impressing didactic points on sympathetic and unsympathetic customers alike, even those who never glimpsed the book's contents. On his success rested the press's very identity and survival.

In order to meet these challenges, Heartfield combined his recent experience with applied art, particularly at the Proletarian Theater, with his earlier lessons as a prewar advertising student. Particularly relevant here was his 1912 work as a designer at the Bauer Brothers paper-packaging plant.[52] Armed with these skills, he began transforming his Dada photomontage and typographic practices, which had been meant to disorient and antagonize the spectator with haptic excess. Now he set about developing a series of techniques that would clarify, allure, entertain, and—most importantly—capture viewers' attention with a quick jolt. The pictorial shift Heartfield made in response to these marketing and agitational demands was as profound as the one Grosz made to his pictures in September 1920. In Heartfield's case, the result was an unreserved success. As Adolf Behne said of the monteur's formally coherent yet deeply unsettling cover for Upton Sinclair's *Boston*, published by Malik in 1929, "The photomontage of Heartfield: That is photography plus dynamite" (fig. 6.15).[53]

Here was the carefully calibrated detonation of perception that typified Heartfield's mature photomontage. As Herzfelde suggests, it came of age on covers designed to lure booksellers and readers to unusual tomes. These often colorful surfaces provided Heartfield with a mass audience of consumers whose varied responses allowed him to test and transform the inheritance of Dada photomontage. They also helped him become, as Kurt Tucholsky declared, "a small world wonder."[54]

INITIAL EXPERIMENTATION

Heartfield's earliest solutions to Malik's design challenges remained largely graphic and typographic, and these were oriented toward making the first collections of books visually consistent. When Malik began publishing books in addition to its journals in the late 1920, it did so in series, sticking close to the marketing structure that had worked with journals and with Grosz's print portfolios. Knowing one work in a set, a consumer could anticipate the content and style of the others, and might

even decide to purchase the entire collection. Heartfield, therefore, spent great effort giving each series a unified look (fig. 6.5). For the run of Revolutionary Stage Works, he employed the graphic registration bands that he had used to a harried effect in the last two issues of *Die neue Jugend* and again in his typographic work for Grosz and Carl Einstein's notorious Dada-era journal *Der blutige Ernst*. In this latter serial, the bands ran across whole pages, providing dramatic emphasis and visual organization. Over the Revolutionary Stage Works covers, the variously colored bands grow heavier and firmer, dividing the surface into zones committed to a particular piece of text: author, title, publisher. This visual continuity across the series allowed the plays to cohere optically.

Another and far more striking typographic solution falls under the rubric of "original John Heartfield print arrangement," as announced on Heartfield and Grosz's 1921 New Year's card. On Malik's covers the monteur realized this innovation in simplified and hollow characters, each filled with English-language text and set on a soft yellow field (fig. 6.6). He restricted this conceit to the Small Revolutionary Library, a distinctly social science–oriented series in which Lukacs's 1923 *History and Class Consciousness* appeared. This typographic scheme suggested that the largely Marxist-materialist studies between the books' covers would allow readers access to the authentic but seemingly foreign subtext that lay hidden under the day's regular discourses. Such design solutions worked well for Malik's early collections. But it would be Heartfield's first use of photography that anticipated his most successful book cover designs.

100%

In late 1920 or early 1921, Wieland Herzfelde managed to lure the German representative and translator of the American author Upton Sinclair to Malik. Sinclair, by then in midcareer, had penned tremendously popular novels such as *The Jungle* (1906), which now struck Herzfelde as a useful analog to the Proletarian Theater's didactic and tendentious plays. The agent who climbed aboard Malik and enabled this arrangement was an aristocratic leftist named Hermynia zur Mühlen. She had grown up the daughter of an Austrian diplomat and had thereby acquired the language skills needed to translate Sinclair's novels into German. Sinclair would be deeply grateful to her for introducing his literature to German readers who, over the course of the 1920s, constituted one of his most important audiences.[55] Zur Mühlen would go on to be one of the press's indispensable translators and a productive contributor of original texts, such as children's books, which Heartfield illustrated with his own drawings. But for now, after securing an agreement from Malik, she set to work translating Sinclair's typically voluminous and quickly penned *100%: The Story of a Patriot*. Heartfield, in turn, cast about for a cover that might call attention to a story whose author at the time remained largely unknown in Germany.

Fig. 6.5 (opposite) John Heartfield, covers for four books in the Malik Verlag series "Revolutionary Stage Works," 1921–1922: Franz Jung, *Die Kanaker* and *Wie lange noch?*; Upton Sinclair, *Prinz Hagen*; Felix Gasbarra, *Preussische Walpurgisnacht*; Franz Jung, *Anne-Marie*. Galerie Bassenge, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

FRANZ JUNG

DIE KANAKER

WIE LANGE NOCH?

ZWEI SCHAUSPIELE

DER MALIK-VERLAG / BERLIN

UPTON SINCLAIR

PRINZ HAGEN

PHANTASTISCHES SCHAUSPIEL
IN VIER AUFZÜGEN

AUS DEM AMERIKANISCHEN ÜBERSETZT VON
HERMYNIA ZUR MÜHLEN

DER MALIK-VERLAG / BERLIN
JOHN HEARTFIELD

GASBARRA



PREUSSISCHE WALPURGIS-NACHT

DER MALIK-VERLAG / BERLIN
JOHN HEARTFIELD

FRANZ JUNG

ANNE-MARIE

DER MALIK-VERLAG / BERLIN



Fig. 6.6
John Heartfield, book cover for Karl August Wittfogel, *Die Wissenschaft der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (*The Study of Bourgeois Society*; Berlin: Malik, 1922). Collection of author. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

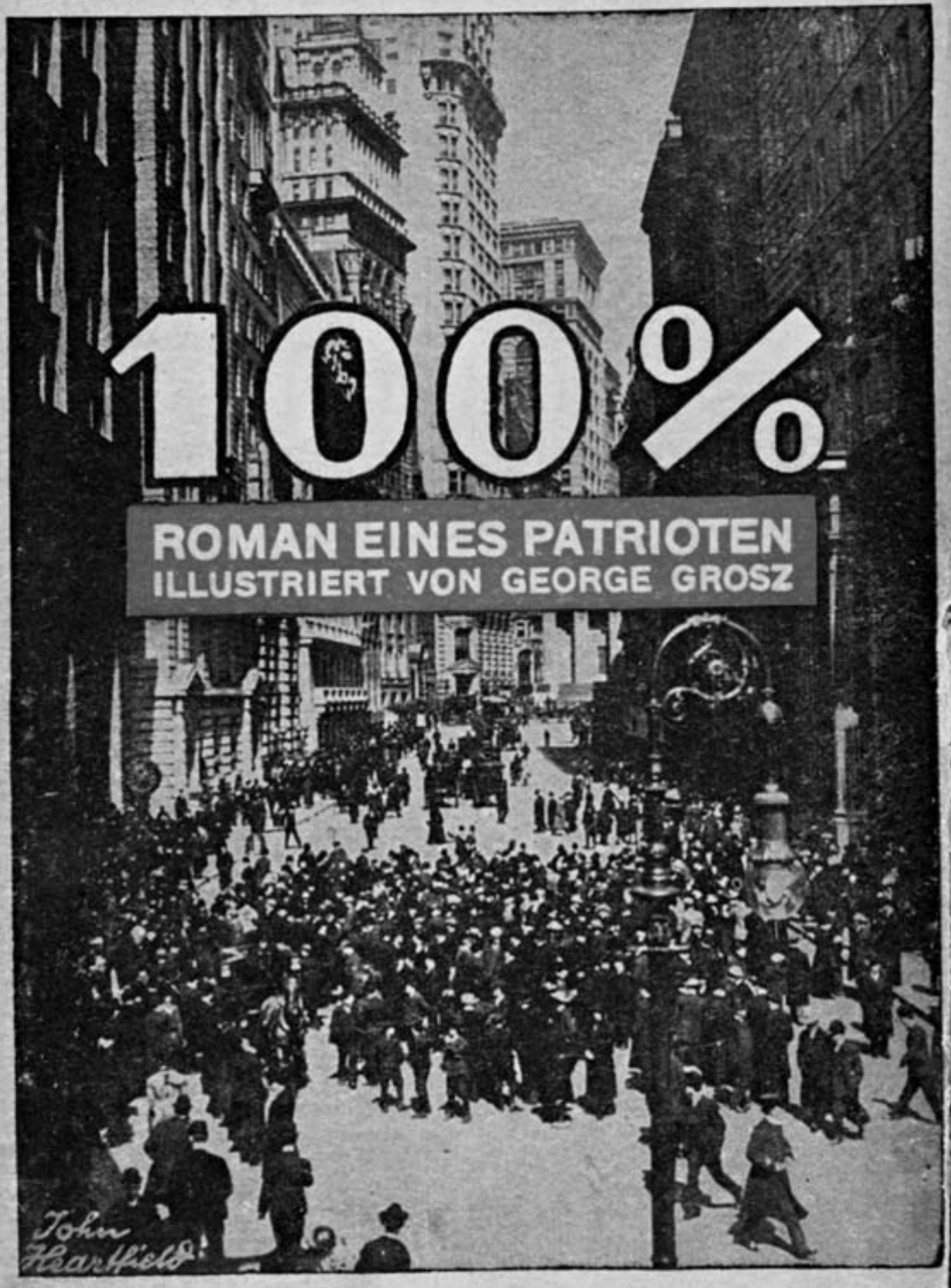
His solution was strikingly original: an appropriated photograph of New York's Wall Street district printed directly onto the book's cardboard cover, the title set within a deep urban canyon between skyscrapers (fig. 6.7). In its relative seamlessness, the photograph, most likely taken as part of the Detroit Publishing Company's series documenting the country's most important sites (fig. 6.8), now suggests an easy equation of colossal architecture and the corridors of economic power. This is a relationship between space and mastery thematized by Sinclair's novel and graphically affirmed by Heartfield's typeset title, which spans the ravine's length. Gazing upon this distinctive photograph, a potential reader could quickly grasp the theme of American economic prowess and the crowded street in which the novel begins. In this respect the cover functioned to establish the book's narrative, showing the view to Wall Street's Federal Hall, in front of which American anarchists had detonated a colossal bomb on September 16, 1920. Under the ravaged corpse of a women killed in the blast, the lightly injured working-class protagonist of *100%* begins his journey into industrial espionage, corporate corruption, and eventual redemption.

This vision also functions on a different but related level, providing a vision of the corporate institutions that figure prominently throughout the book. Here stand the impressive edifices where bankers such as J. P. Morgan, as the novel explains, profitably financed the Great War and thereby "made the world safe for democracy."[56] These connections between cover and content would become even clearer in Heartfield's subsequent work, which often made use of receding text and a potent image on the book's back cover (fig. 6.9). But already in this initial 1921 edition, the seemingly monumental title and the subtitle printed on a floating field of red help establish the meaning of the photograph while also coordinating the image with the novel's content. The cover was, as Herzfelde had specified, both alluring and instructional, essentially a didactic paper wrapper.

With this 1921 cover, Heartfield signaled his intention to combine photography and text to suggest a novel's content allegorically, in this case equating New York skyscrapers with American economic might. It is no accident that this alignment works on a formal level as well: the plunge into Broad Street's deep skyscraper-lined canyon maps the protagonist's plunge

Fig. 6.7
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *100%. Roman eines Patrioten* (*100%: The Story of a Patriot*), first Malik edition (Berlin: Malik, 1921). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (85-B15876). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

UPTON SINCLAIR



DER MALIK-VERLAG · BERLIN



Fig. 6.8
Detroit Publishing Company, *Broad Street, New York*, ca. 1905. Detroit Publishing Company Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

into the corridors of American economic power. At the other end of the story, he emerges schooled in and then redeemed from capitalism's evils.

This early use of a photograph achieved another important equation as well. For it seemed to dispassionately document the novel's setting in a manner that optically paralleled Sinclair's straightforward and journalistic text. To a significant extent, then, it prepared the reader for the novel's didactic tone and its content. Where the signatories of "The Laws of Painting" had once hoped that photography as a reference might help simplify and deindividualize their new pictures, Heartfield deployed the medium itself to signal just this style in Sinclair's text.

The response to this cover and to the others that Heartfield designed through 1921 was strongly positive. But it was not just customers who indicated approval

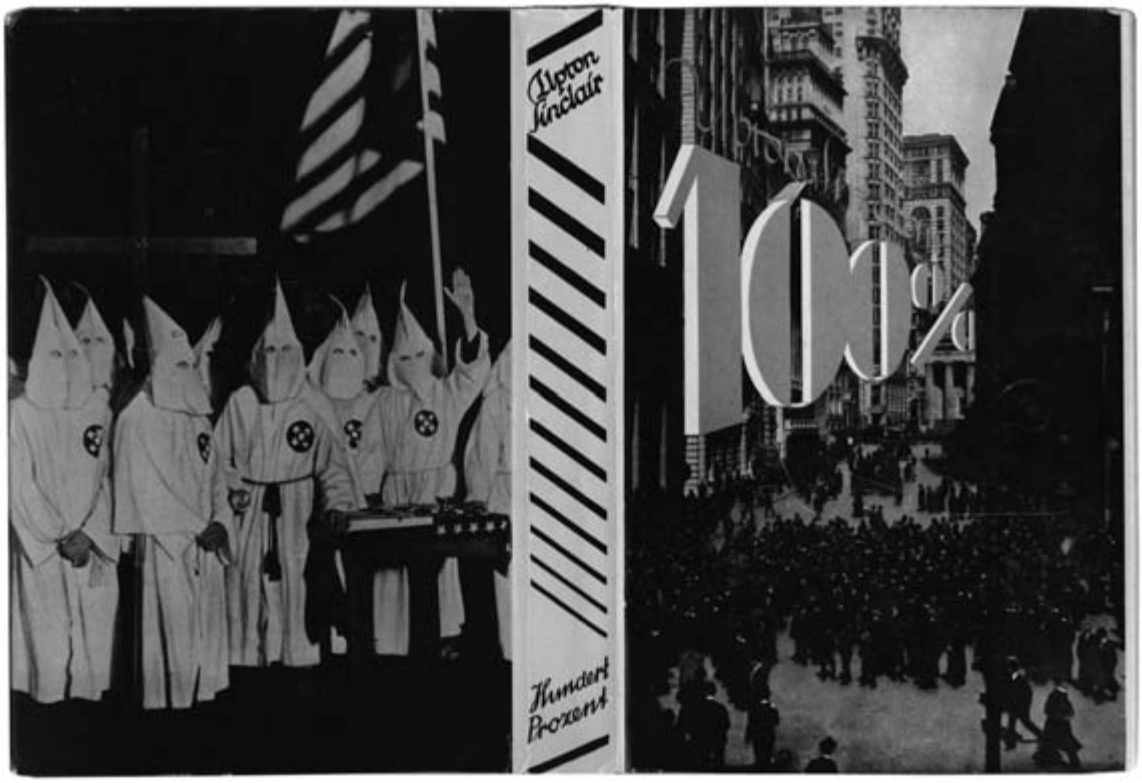


Fig. 6.9
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *100%. Roman eines Patrioten* (*100%: The Story of a Patriot*; Berlin: Malik, 1928). Sammlung Jürgen und Waltraud Holstein, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

with their purchases. Other small left-wing presses also took notice, and they too began commissioning covers from Heartfield, a development that greatly expanded his opportunity for experimentation. Like Malik itself, these other presses faced a difficult set of challenges, which Heartfield met with aplomb. As with his Malik covers and his earlier Dada work, he borrowed heavily from early Weimar's visual culture. There he found the recently abstracted figures of his close friend George Grosz and the dynamic arrangements of color planes or abstracted forms typical of the moment's avant-garde painting. These he combined with the tamed typography and graphic work that he had begun using at Malik (fig. 6.10).

Throughout the Weimar era and into the 1930s, he continued to experiment lavishly, even going so far as to wrap a Malik book about the seductive film industry in glimmering gold foil (plate 3). With this design, the book became an alluring object that Tucholsky compared to a "gilded cookie box."[57] Presumably, the interior text constituted the tasty baked treat. But it was the photograph that remained Heartfield's most important means of tantalizing the customer. The photochemical imprint, he declared in 1930, solicited attention like little else and had "the greatest power of persuasion."[58]

Various shortcomings in Heartfield's first *100%* cover, however, demonstrated his need to think further about ways to employ the medium. The picture of New York's Broad Street may have set the narrative scene and anticipated the literary

style, but it failed to suggest the specific actors and thematic tensions that would be developed through the book's narrative. Similarly, the grand bank buildings provided an allegory for towering American financial power, but they did little to intimate the critique of these institutions that Sinclair carried out with his cool and straightforward writing. Heartfield would not be fully successful in foregrounding a book's content and style until he learned to *sharpen* and then *juxtapose* those terms with his (largely) appropriated photographs. He thus faced a two-step evolution that ultimately landed him on the familiar terrain of photomontage, a pictorial technique that allowed him to suggest the razor-edged political tensions that became the hallmark of Malik's new novels. The first step involved the photographs themselves. From 1921 through 1924, he concentrated on ways to sharpen a photograph's information. Thereafter the second step required juxtaposing this distilled data, producing book covers that critic Hans Reimann later described as "unsettling, stirring, smooth, begetting of curiosity, and always peculiar."[59]

BACK TO THE MOVIES

By 1922 Heartfield had struck upon the key to this stirring yet smooth use of photography: the pictorial language of cinema. More specifically, he adapted several categories of cinematic photography that condensed a film's complex temporal unfolding and character development into a single picture: the film still, the establishing shot, the star portrait, and the movie advertisement. Such images, particularly as photographs, were perfectly suited to his task. They could organize the narrative and character development of a book, as they did with movies, into a single, well-organized static image that appealed with a tease.[60] His 1922 Malik cover for Sinclair's *Der Liebe Pilgerfahrt* (originally *Love's Pilgrimage*, 1911; fig. 6.11), for example, uses a film still (*Standfoto*) to compress the book's content into an immediately legible image of adventure and love acted out by highly recognizable and appealing character types from the American cinema.[61] His 1925 cover for *Eros* (plate 4) employs a tightly framed portrait of Hollywood diva Gloria Swanson, most likely produced for her 1920 film *Why Change Your Wife?* (fig. 6.12). On the cover, her brightly colored lips emphasize the eroticism of her character while also linking her visage to the similarly tinted title and back cover, on which two moths seem to kiss. Heartfield's 1930 cover for Vsevolod Ivanov's *Der Buchstabe G* (*The Letter G*; fig. 6.13) devises an interesting political-aesthetic twist on the film still by employing worker photographer Eugen Heilig's affectionate shot of a Russian man and his child enjoying a movie at an itinerant Soviet cinema. The boy's stunned immersion in the film's narrative, coupled with the bright light reflecting off his face and his father's sober support, suggests the reader's pending delight in the book. The title's letter "G" appears on the cover, spine, and back, helping pull the photograph onto the spine and allowing this narrow surface to call out from a crowded bookshelf.[62] Because



Fig. 6.10
John Heartfield, book cover for Karl August Wittfogel, *Von Urkommunismus bis zur proletarischen Revolution* (*From Primitive Communism Up to Proletarian Revolution*; Berlin: Verlag Junge Garde, 1922). Sammlung Jürgen und Waltraud Holstein, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Fig. 6.11
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *Der liebe Pilgerfahrt* (*Love's Pilgrimage*), first Malik edition (Berlin: Malik, 1922). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (92-B11498). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Fig. 6.12
Gloria Swanson in a film still from Cecil B. DeMille, *Why Change Your Wife?* (1920). Kobal Collection.



Fig. 6.13
John Heartfield, book cover for Vsevolod Ivanov, *Der Buchstabe G* (*The Letter G*; Berlin: Malik, 1930). Galerie Bassenge, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

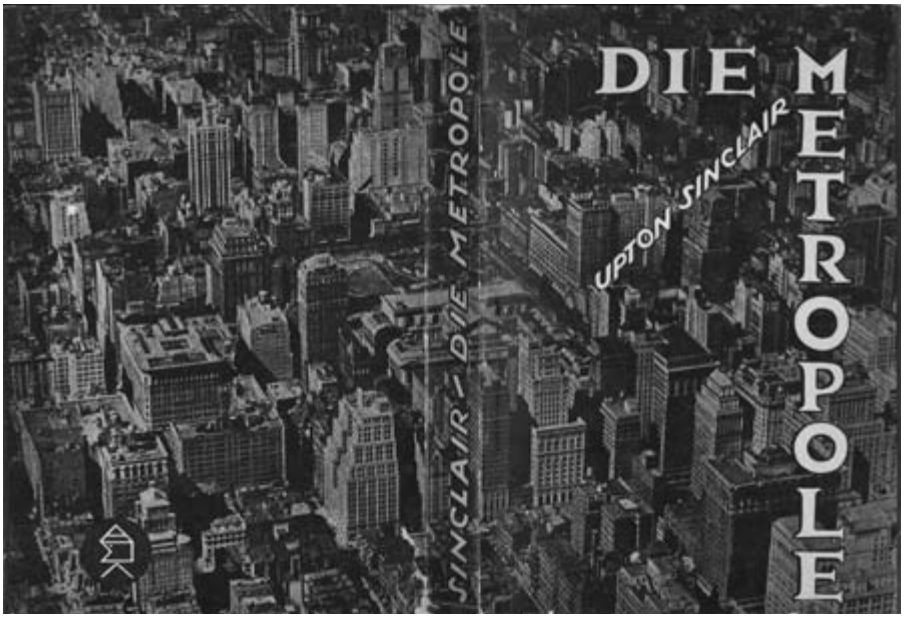


Fig. 6.14
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *Die Metropole* (*The Metropolis*; Berlin: Malik, 1925). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (91-B35500). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Heartfield had worked as a film director from 1917 to 1922 and had already equated the cinema with photomontage in his *Leben und Treiben* Dada picture, the value of film-related photographs for his book covers would have been clear.

What Heartfield needed from these images was their capacity to compress narrative, develop character, and signal writing style. Given his proclivity toward experimentation, he quickly learned how to restructure other found and commissioned photographs according to this same cinematic logic to produce similar distillations.

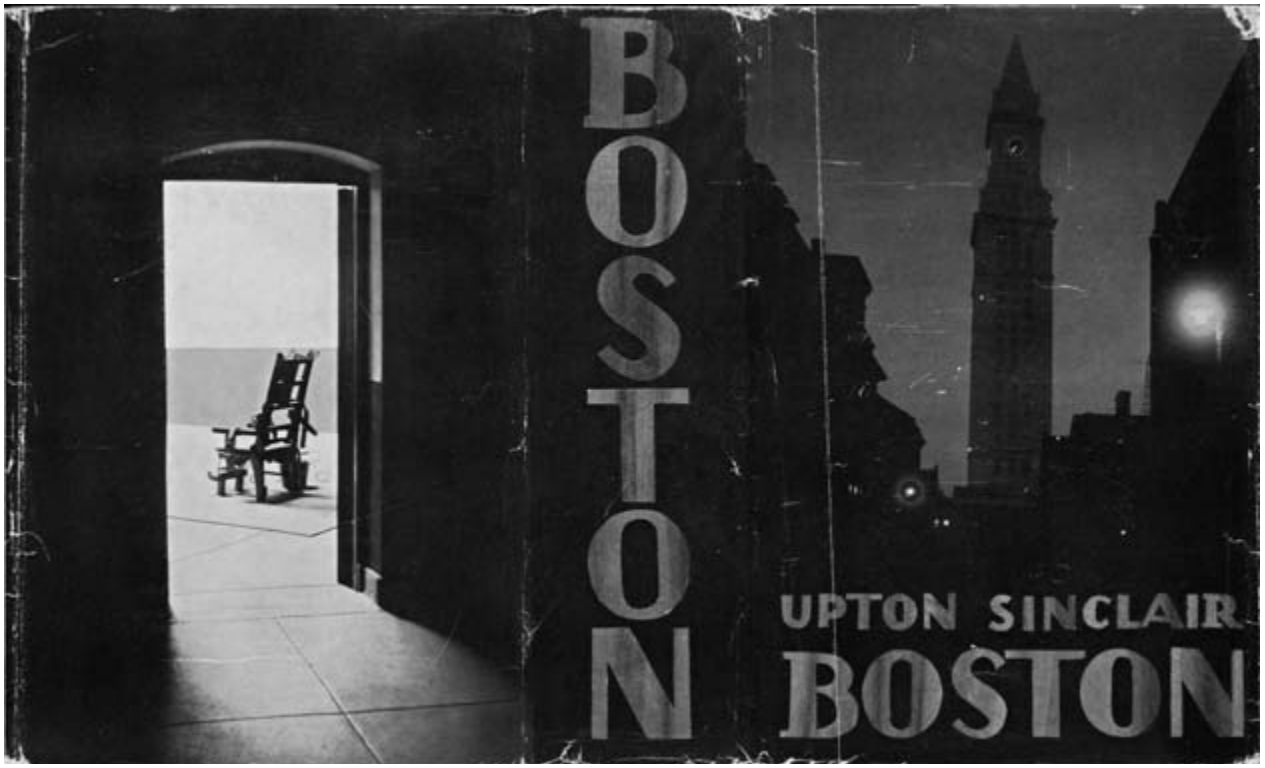


Fig. 6.15
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *Boston* (Berlin: Malik, 1929). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (91-B10227). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

His cover for Sinclair's *Der Sumpf* (*The Jungle*), likely dating to 1924 (plate 5), uses the logic of a narrative establishing shot or proscenium backdrop to set the stage for this semireportage's horrific unfolding.[63] As the Chicago slaughterhouses and surrounding factories fill the entire book cover and recede along a dynamic diagonal, the bold title retreats with them, following the grid these buildings establish toward a distant vanishing point. This pictorial-textual coordination suggests a dramatic narrative progression along rigid orthogonal lines, much like those in his *Fathers and Sons* poster of the same year. Heartfield used a similar pictorial setup for Malik's 1925 edition of Sinclair's *Metropolis*. Here an aerial view of Manhattan, centered on the New York Public Library, spreads once more across the entire cover and establishes the story's setting with a grid of skyscrapers turned at a subtle diagonal with no horizon line (fig. 6.14). Although Heartfield was not the first designer to use photographs on book covers, he was the first to spread their emulsion across a jacket's entire surface. With the pictorial language of cinema as his guide, he essentially sought to transform the cover into a screen.

As will be further explained below, he also employed a book's front and back covers to juxtapose an establishing shot with an image suggesting the story's outcome, as he did for Sinclair's *Boston* (1929; fig. 6.15). Here the stark but beautiful nighttime silhouette of the New England city's skyline, on the front cover, is countered on the back cover with a photo of an electric chair. In a similar seat, anarchists Sacco

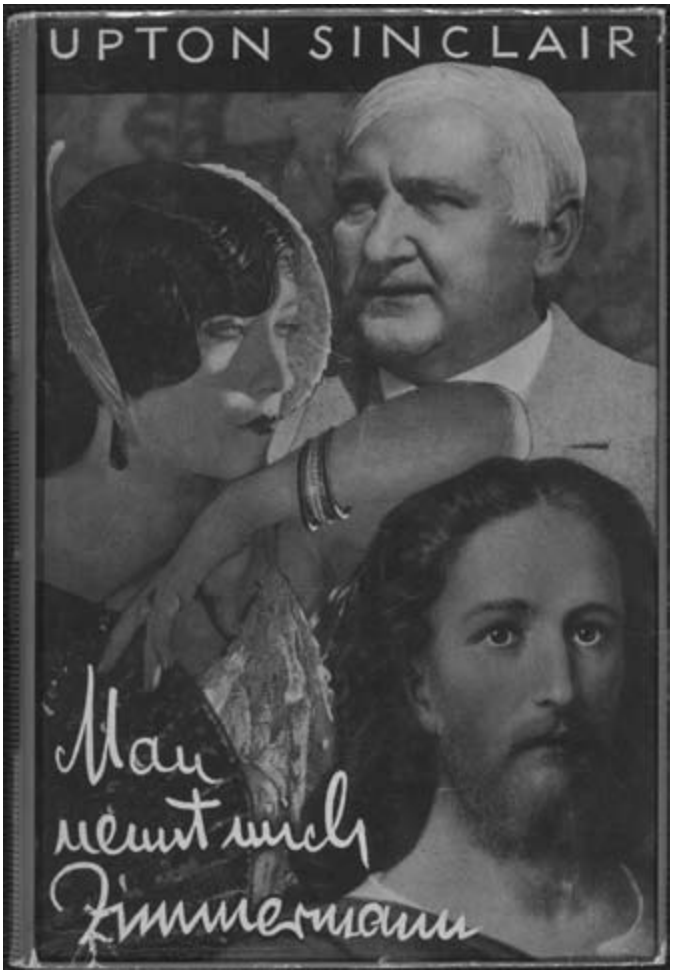


Fig. 6.16
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *Man nennt mich Zimmermann* (*They Call Me Carpenter: A Tale of the Second Coming*; Berlin: Malik, 1922). Robert Allerton Purchase Fund, Bob and June Leibowits Collection, 2009.329, Art Institute of Chicago. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

and Vanzetti were executed in 1927 following two highly politicized murder trails. Setting these two images in juxtaposition, Heartfield contrasts two tightly controlled photographs in order to suggest the cruel judicial reality that underlies Boston's nighttime beauty, the state-sponsored murder that took place in the otherwise peaceful dark of an urban night.[64]

JUXTAPOSITION OF CINEMATIC TERMS

It was through the photography of cinema that Heartfield first set up such juxtapositions for his covers. Working with authentic film stills and movie studio portraits, he learned to sort and contrast the terms of narrative or character development that they provided. This made his cinematic pictures both alluring and surprising, the characteristics Herzfelde later recalled as his brother's charge. The monteur's 1922 cover for Sinclair's *Man nennt mich Zimmermann* (*They Call Me Carpenter: A Tale of*

the Second Coming; fig. 6.16) starkly juxtaposes the stock figures of the millionaire, the diva, and Jesus himself, suggesting the unfolding moral conflicts that ground the novel's religion-inflected social critique. The diva is, of course, Gloria Swanson. His cover for Mynona's (Salomo Friedländer) *Graue Magie* (*Gray Magic*; fig. 6.17) offers the iconic vision of Leni Riefenstahl dancing in her first mountain film (fig. 6.18) as an oddly desirous attraction for man and animal alike. On Sinclair's *Der Wechsler* he contrasts an overhead establishing shot of traders at Chicago's Commodity Exchange with actual printed listings generated by their work.

In composing these covers, Heartfield garnered another skill from his study of the photographic language of cinema: he learned to transform press photos into pregnant film stills that render history as a class-conscious narrative. On his 1924 cover for *Platz dem Arbeiter!* (*A Place for the Worker!*; fig. 6.19), public urban spaces become the field in which various stages of the 1918–1919 German Revolution took shape. Assembled masses of rebels struggle on deeply receding urban streets while anonymous heroes, who metonymically stand for these impoverished masses, are escorted by *Freikorps* or police toward the center of the front cover. On the back cover a *Volksredner* addresses a large assembly while the right readies its response. The crowds are again framed by specific types: a poor man begs near well-dressed women who stand before a luxurious shop window, and numerous tenement children crowd into their cramped apartment's narrow bed, a scene that recalls Albert Kohn's surveys of Berlin housing. Heartfield simplified this approach to a dramatic punch for Ernst Ottwalt's *Ruhe und Ordnung* (ca. 1929; fig. 6.20). In this case, a single press image of resting *Freikorps* soldiers provides a deeply receding perspective whose orthogonal lines (defined by the building against which the soldiers rest) establish a frame for the receding title. This pictorial conceit suggests the novel's narrative progression down Berlin's violent Revolution-era streets.

These last photomontages exemplify a particularly important direction in Heartfield's work. Having learned how to transform press photos into static film-like narratives, both alone and in sequence, he now possessed nearly the full formula for his laconic photomontages that would appear in the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* beginning in 1930. With these features he could seemingly unveil a reality hidden from vision, as had been his strategy ever since he and George Grosz had montaged postcards destined for the wartime front. But in his work for the *AIZ*, Heartfield structured that unveiling with historical narratives, allegories, and character types (largely politicians) that he defined through photographic lessons learned from the cinema. Juxtaposing these tightly focused images allowed him to transform their surface significations with an easy efficiency and striking punch.

It was just this coordination of pictorially defined narrative, sharply focused identity, and carefully composed juxtaposition that had appeared in his 1924 photomontage *Fathers and Sons* (fig. 6.3). These three factors conspired, in that famous image, to rewrite narrative and upend identity in the service of a larger unmasking of reality. The agitated crowds Heartfield had attracted to the Malik shop window with this poster were thus the same ones he wished to lure with his dramatically

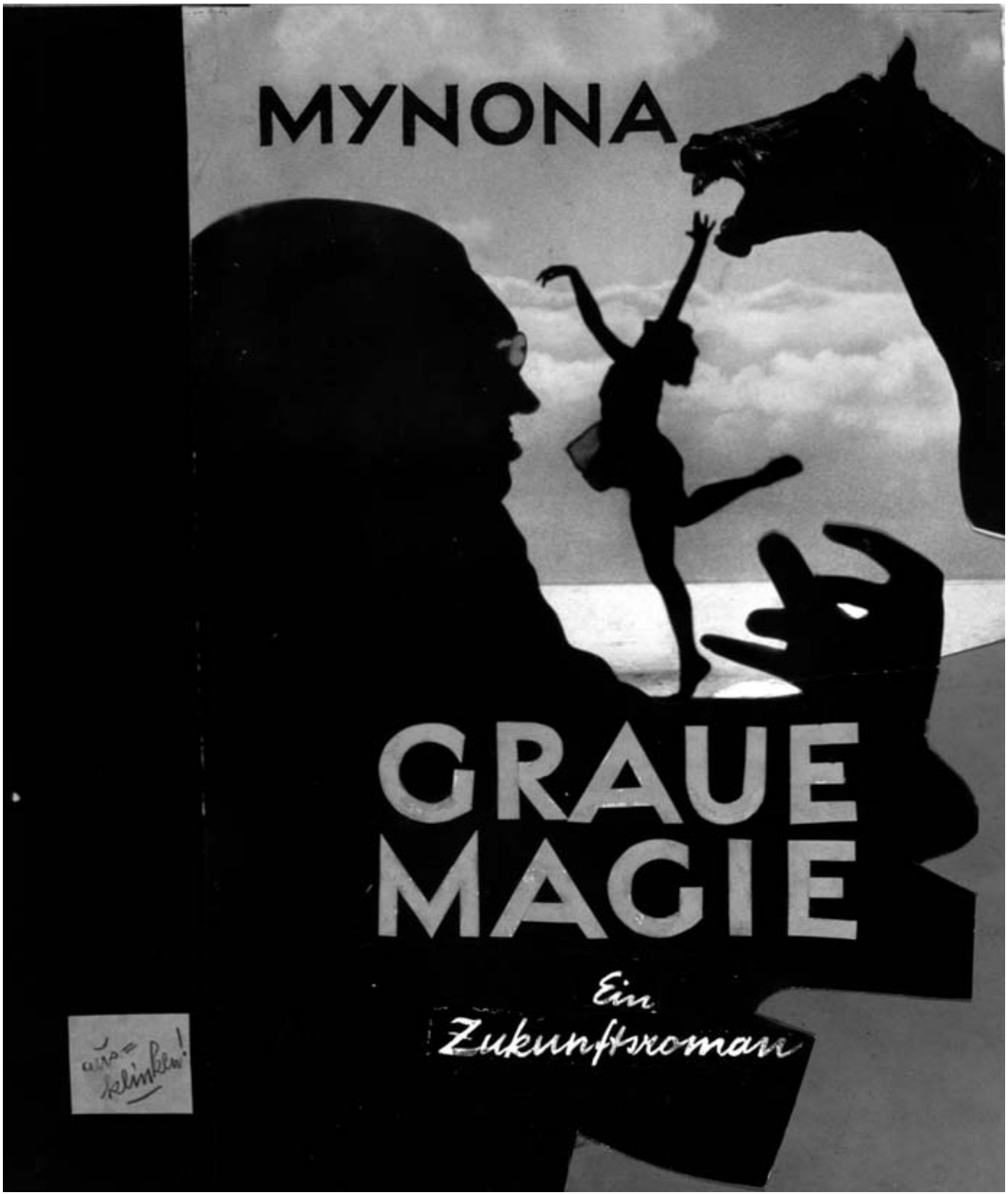


Fig. 6.17
John Heartfield, maquette for cover of Mynona (Salomo Friedländer), *Graue Magie* (*Gray Magic*), ca. 1926. This design was likely not published. Academie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Fig. 6.18
Leni Riefenstahl dancing in Arnold Fanck, *Der heilige Berg*, 1926. Screen capture by author.

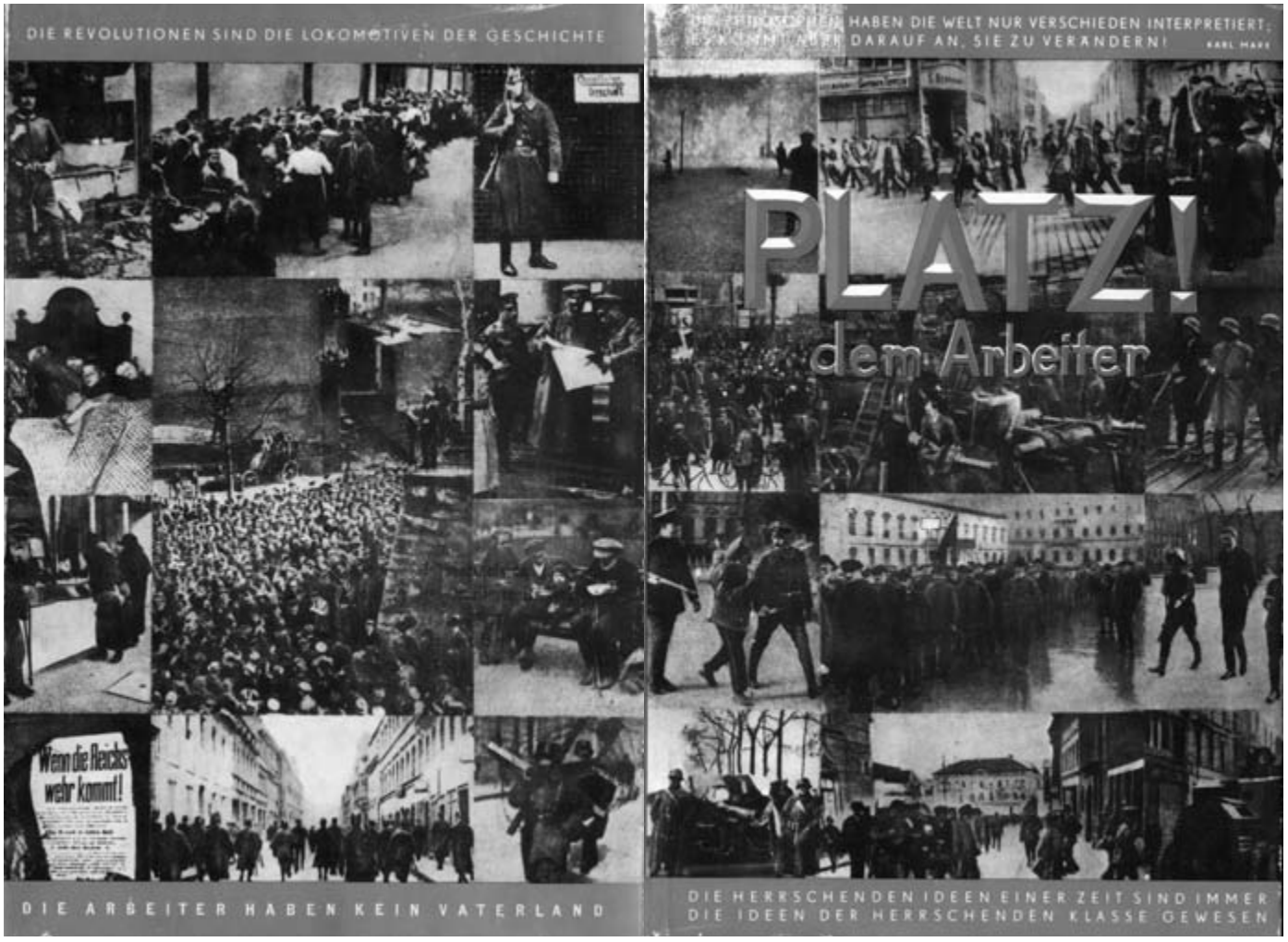

DIE REVOLUTIONEN SIND DIE LOKOMOTIVEN DER GESCHICHTE
Wenn die Reaktion weiter kommt!
DIE ARBEITER HABEN KEIN VATERLAND
HABEN DIE WELT NUR VERSCHIEDEN INTERPRETIERT; DARAUF AN, SIE ZU VERÄNDERN!
KARL MARX
PLATZ!
dem Arbeiter
DIE HERRSCHENDEN IDEEN EINER ZEIT SIND IMMER DIE IDEEN DER HERRSCHENDEN KLASSE GEWESEN

Fig. 6.19
John Heartfield, book cover for *Platz dem Arbeiter!* (*A Place for the Worker*; Berlin: Malik, 1924). Private Collection. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.


Keine Zeit mehr zu verlieren! Jede Minute ist kostbar!
Aufruf
zum Eintritt als Freiwilliger!
Ruhe und Ordnung für unser Vaterland!
Friedliche Arbeit und Schutz des Eigentums!
Freiwillige vor!
wollen Ruhe und Ordnung im Innern.
hützen die National-Versammlung und
die Durchführung ihrer Beschlüsse.
ämpfen für deutsches Land gegen
und jeden, der es uns entreißen will.
Ruhe und Ordnung?
Der helfe!
führerischen Elemente, unter deren Gewalt-
herrschaft
so schwer leidet, haben auch die Werbung
für die
willigenverbände bei Euch verboten und
durch
lt unmöglich gemacht.
Sie hassen uns, weil unsere wohlgeordneten Ver-
bände Recht und Ordnung schützen und das einzige
ERNST
OTTWALT
RUHE
UND
ORDNUNG
Ein wahrheitsgetreues Protokoll eigener Erlebnisse in den Reihen der Nachkriegsjugend, die sich die „nationale" nennt / Nicht Einmaliges und Zufälliges wird hier berichtet: es läuft ein roter Faden von den Novemberkämpfen über München und Kapp, Mitteldeutschland, Oberschlesien bis zu den Bombenattentaten der Landvolkleute / Ich half diesen Faden spinnen / Dieses Buch soll ihn zerreißen helfen.
ERNST OTTWALT
RUHE UND ORDNUNG
ROMAN AUS DEM LEBEN
DER NATIONALGESINNTEN JUGEND

Fig. 6.20
John Heartfield, book cover for Ernst Ottwalt, *Ruhe und Ordnung: Roman aus dem Leben der Nationalgesinnten Jugend* (*Peace and Order: A Novel from the Life of Nationalist-Minded Youth*; Berlin: Malik, ca. 1929). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (91-B12593). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

covered books and his illustrations for *AIZ*. In producing the latter, his pictorial accompaniment to reportage literature itself returned to the realm of journalism, where this literature had found its origin and from which Heartfield's post-Dada transformation had commenced. He had forged not just a pictorial equivalent to reportage but a mature photomontage voice that easily acquired a home on the terrain of actual newspapers and magazines.

THE SHOP WINDOW

Behind all of these advents lay a specific set of conditions that further account for the structure of Heartfield's book covers and how they, in turn, came to perform so effectively. As Wieland Herzfelde explained in his 1962 biography of the monteur, "These surfaces were meant to prompt not only the few leftist booksellers but also those of a different opinion to display our new publications and reprints in their shop windows."[65] Malik, of course, lacked the distribution channels that would have come from a direct relationship with the KPD and its bookstores, had Herzfelde been willing to build such a connection. Wanting too was a Malik book club or subscription service, which would have guaranteed returning customers, and a large advertising budget. Private booksellers were, therefore, the press's primary sales agents. But many of these largely middle-class merchants were politically opposed to Malik's undisguised communist orientation. How could the press surmount their

recalcitrance and not only earn space on their shelves but compete for the coveted real estate of their window displays? This is where Heartfield's adaptation of the language of cinema proved essential.

Germany's Weimar era has since become famous for its spectacular surface culture, characterized by flashing electric signs, brilliant billboards, and glass architecture, the last of which offered crystalline veneers through which interior and exterior spaces interpenetrated. In most cases, modern advertising commandeered the content and shape of this culture and, by extension, the visual experience of the street. Under these heady conditions, the Weimar Republic essentially externalized itself in an optical performance specifically made available to pedestrians on urban thoroughfares. In this surface culture, the shop window display played a key role.[66] With it, stores provided an interstitial space where they boastfully displayed their wares to the outside world and coaxed passersby to enter and buy. Here too Weimar's often spectacular visual codes of consumption met the concrete interaction of commodity and consumer.[67]

The shop windows of Weimar proved tremendously seductive and even, to some eyes, dangerous. In the movie *M* (dir. Fritz Lang, 1930), the actor Peter Lorre famously approaches two of his potential child victims just as each finds her caution overwhelmed by the allure of shop windows. The first of these moments proved so central to the narrative and its primary character's development that it warranted a film still (fig. 6.21). Taken from within the display space, an endless array of toys guides the gaze outward to the street, where the child reaches forward, as if to cross the glassy threshold of abundant material desire, as the murderer, behind her, draws closer.

In his second attempt, another child (and in a cross-shot, the murderer himself) is reflected in a mirror framed with knives and hung in a silverware display (fig. 6.22). Knives, of course, are his weapon of choice. The girl also peers into the window



Fig. 6.21
Film still from Fritz Lang, *M*, 1930. Kobal Collection.



Fig. 6.22
Frames from Fritz Lang, *M*, 1930. Screen captures by author.

and thereby offers her reflection to Lorre's character, who nearly collapses from uncontained wanting. Moments later, he comes closest to snatching her before a bookstore window, no less, where open tomes receive spectacular emphasis from a rapidly plunging arrow and a large swirling disk. For the girl, this display serves not just as an invitation to the bookshop's interior and wares, but also to distraction, which brings her to the precipice of death.[68]

Once Germany's notorious hyperinflation had subsided in late 1923, merchants took quick advantage of the new sales potential that the stabilized currency afforded. The professionalization of the shop window took off. In 1926 the Trade Association of German Book Merchants (Börsenverein der deutschen Buchhändler) published a hundred-page guide to this practice entitled *The Good Bookshop Window* (*Das gute Buchfenster*). In its pages the author warned truculent merchants that the days of simply throwing recommended or newly published books into an unsystematic display were gone. The standard was now the "special window" (*Sonderfenster*), which organized selected books around a single and easily intelligible theme, much like a stage set.[69] The good bookshop window essentially had to be conceived as a rostrum on which the books performed around this unified topic. Additional objects, whether sculpture or plunging arrows, served as props while posters and fabrics provided backdrops. Ideally, a book's placement and cover design would conform to the perspectival structure (*perspektivische Aufbau*) of the display's space, seamlessly guiding spectators' eyes toward center stage.[70]

What one notices in the guide's numerous illustrations of successful and unsuccessful displays, however, is that the books unfailingly sink into nondescript objecthood behind the more dominant accouterments of stage setting. In one example, bland-looking books, their designs typifying the middecade standard, run over each other at the center of the window while a figure on the left peers through his





mounted telescope (rendered through the display's Bernini-like perspectival plunge) toward cloud-framed planets (fig. 6.23). Another display, focused on the literary output of the Insel Verlag, presents similarly bland books as cascading objects, which focus attention not on themselves but on the poster behind them (fig. 6.24).

Nearly the same can be said of the bookshop display in *M*, where shy volumes subside before the darting arrow, spinning disk, and masonry-like arrangement of frosted glass behind them. Such extras, it turns out, were seldom supplied by the publishers but instead were produced through the bookshop staff's own handiwork, which may in part explain the emphasis on shop names in *The Good Bookshop Window*.[71] But, it might also be argued, this elaborate staging essentially compensated for the uneventful book covers that typified mid-Weimar publishing, a dullness that stood in stark contrast to Heartfield's work and that of other avant-garde pioneers, such as László Moholy-Nagy.[72] Only in the guide's examples of bad displays do the books pronounce their presence with visually loud, often chaotic covers resembling the front pages of newspapers; the result is optical disorder (figs. 6.25 and 6.26). With its covers, Malik pursued a third possibility. The best books for display might be those that could shed their objecthood and perform as actors, abandoning flat typography and vacant leather binding for images rich in illusionistic perspective. But these would have to be pictures that avoided the visual excess of newspaper-like clarion calls. At best, these covers would offer economical and uniform images that demanded far less window staging and, therefore, could draw consumers' attention based on their own design merit.

This again is where the logic of the film still worked so well for Heartfield. It quite literally deposited actors on the bookshop's display's stage while providing carefully honed clues to each tome's narrative and character development, all with a tight pictorial economy that demanded scarcely any external props. Its pictorial space

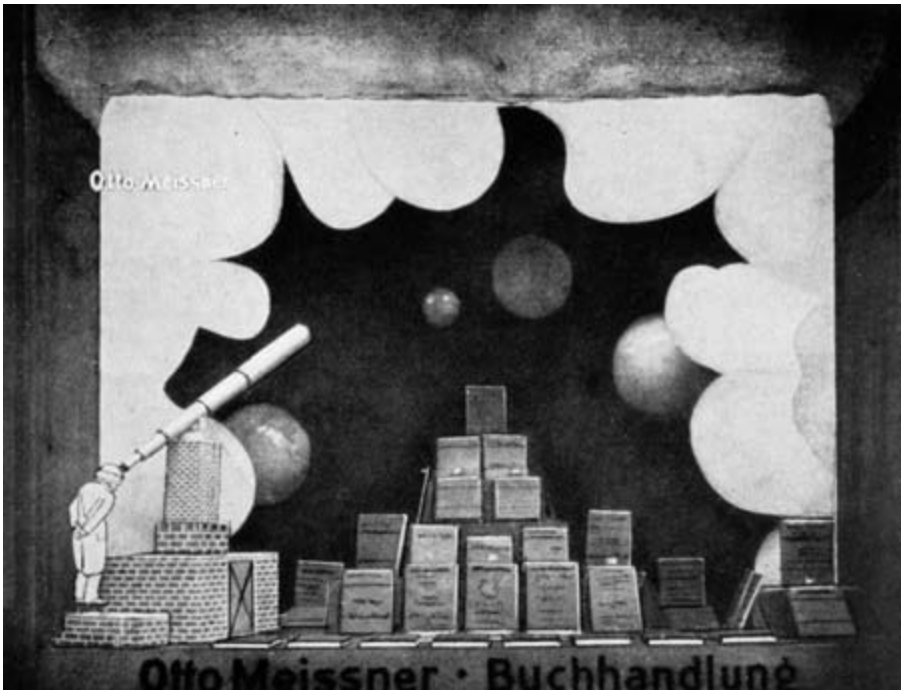


Fig. 6.23
Display from the Otto Meissner bookstore, Hamburg. In Friedrich Reinecke, *Das gute Buchfenster* (*The Good Bookshop Window*), 1926, plate 45. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz.



Fig. 6.24
Display from the Helmuth Schmidt bookstore, Hamburg. In Friedrich Reinecke, *Das gute Buchfenster* (*The Good Bookshop Window*), 1926, plate 53. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

could also potentially coordinate with the window's architectural space and thus integrate the volume illusionistically into the podium of presentation, much as the star-gazing figure and his distorted telescope aligned with their window's carefully constructed plunge into depth. This discovery, however, had great implications not just for book merchants' marketing success but for Heartfield's own approach to montage. For the impetus behind film stills was control, strict pictorial control.





Fig. 6.25 (left)
Unattributed example of a bad book display. In Friedrich Reinecke, *Das gute Buchfenster* (*The Good Bookshop Window*), 1926, plate 7. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Fig. 6.26 (right)
Unattributed example of a bad book display. In Friedrich Reinecke, *Das gute Buchfenster* (*The Good Bookshop Window*), 1926, plate 12. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin/Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

This command over the photograph, in turn, typified the monteur's developing relationship with the photographic medium after Dada.

CINEMA AND CONTROL

Film stills such as those that appeared on Heartfield's book covers first emerged at the turn of the century, when the marketing of cinema hit its stride.[73] These cabinet-size prints sought to lure audiences to a movie by distilling its plot to a few key turns and capturing the actors as these twists revealed their cinematic personas. A still from the 1923 Hollywood feature *Salome*, for example, shows the moment when the biblical seductress juts her face forward and directs her overpowering gaze toward her Syrian guard (fig. 6.27). Though pictures such as these clung tightly to the film they distill, they were in fact separately staged photographs, not frames extracted from the film's celluloid strip. "Still photographers," as they called themselves in English, generally came to a movie set with a large format, eight-by-ten-inch camera and tripod just after a scene had been filmed. Quickly they captured an image before the actors broke their positions. "Hold it for the still," was often the call as Hollywood movie cameras wound down.[74] But not everything stayed where it was; still photographers commonly finessed a number of factors to optimize the distillation of narrative and character development in their otherwise static photographs.

The still from the heavily stylized film *Salome*, for example, registers a number of fine details that likely did not exist in the feature itself.[75] Between the murky resolu-

tion of Alla Nazimova's cape and the sharp detail of her heavily made-up face lies a distinction that emphasizes this dramatic moment of confrontation. Her resplendent cape, which puddles at the bottom of the frame, asserts its own figural presence and displaces the rest of the composition to the right, where a carefully staged tango of domination takes place. As Nazimova towers above her victim (perhaps with the aid of a prop), her look holds him rapt and her right hand falls on his shoulder. He, in turn, thrusts his left arm and leg backward. These frozen gestures mark a charged denouement on which the film's drama turns. Meanwhile, the picture's overdetermined visual codes define Nazimova's character in terms of the familiar stereotypes of the femme fatale and prepackaged notions of sexually charged exchange. And all of these visual signals are emphasized by the strong lighting, which generally had to be recalibrated for the demands of large-format photography.[76]

Responding to the restrictions imposed by static photography, the still photographer has devised various conceits to enhance this moment of biblical action. The facial expressions are heavily calculated, and the figural grouping is likely an amalgamation of numerous moments from the scene. As design historian Alois Martin Müller suggests, these carefully staged photographs became *tableaux vivants*, showing narrative unfolding over space rather than time.[77] The drama between the two figures takes place not in their movement from frame to frame, but in the instant passage of Salome's look to the frightened man, a tense communication played up by the photographer's framing, focus, and lighting. Film stills flooding Germany after the war worked in the same fashion. This was particularly apparent in the country's cinema trade journals, which deployed stills as a means of advertising films to distributors and movie houses. In an image representing *Herbstblumen* (*Autumn Flowers*), for instance, the action is frozen as a woman braces herself on a railing and five figures cast their gazes in her direction with pregnant curiosity (fig. 6.28, second still on the left).

As Roland Barthes observed in his reflections on the film still, such signifying structures provide a "diegetic horizon" on which a spectator could imagine the plot's advancement. In fact, Barthes famously preferred this pictorial resplendence to the film itself, in which the subsequent image or approaching cut suspends absorptive contemplation of the dramatic moment. Here was his famous "third meaning" of cinema, as provided by the narrative rich photographic instant. In this filmic splinter, the spectator could linger over the endless details that build a movie's narrative.[78]

In Heartfield's day, pictures such as these filled display cases installed in front of theaters. Film stills and the closely related portrait shot, often taken with the performer still in costume and striking a relevant pose, quickly introduced passersby to the cinematic contents being screened inside. They also served as the raw pictorial material for movie posters, lobby cards, advertisements, and fan magazines, all of which stimulated an excited buzz that American and German studios generously fed.[79] As a film director, Heartfield would not only have observed these pictures in their customary locations (particularly in trade journals) but may have overseen their production for his own features and the movies of others.



Fig. 6.27
Film still from Charles Bryant, *Salome*, with Alla Nazimova and Mitchell Lewis (attributed), 1923. Kobal Collection.



Fig. 6.28
Advertisement for Cserepy Film Co., in *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 12, no. 23 (June 1919): 122–23. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin/ Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Given the all-important distillation they had to produce, these pictures were orchestrated just as carefully as the films they described. The same team of professionals—lighting technicians, costume designers, cinematographers—who worked to fashion every last detail of a movie, a collaboration sometimes documented in publicity shots (fig. 6.29), often worked to realize its stills. Each photograph had to be strictly structured in relation to the film it encapsulated, or more specifically, to the anticipated experience of viewing the film. This meant that every factor of a still's production required someone's dedicated attention. Not only did each gesture and each shadow have to contribute to the single narrative or identity-based conceit, but anything extraneous or distracting had to disappear. This process matches almost precisely Heartfield's approach to photography for book covers. Not coincidentally, it also demonstrates how the cinema's migration to photography placed tremendous pressure on the medium to deliver its meaning in an instant, its frozen narrative unfolding across a "diegetic horizon." Heartfield seems to have used this discipline associated with film stills to simplify his photomontage process.

After his experience as a Dadaist, the monteur slowly began transforming his public persona until it resembled what we today would call manic-obsessive. Every facet of picture making, from beginning to end, was subject to his relentless oversight, much like that of a still photographer and her or his crew. Not satisfied with his own talent as a photographer or airbrush-wielding retoucher, he frequently commissioned highly trained professionals to realize his vision. The Hungarian



Fig. 6.29
Production shot from Clarence Brown, *Romance*, 1930. Kobal Collection.

photographer János Reismann, whom, as mentioned in the introduction, Heartfield once tasked with photographing a dancing crab and perfect early-morning hoarfrost for book covers, documented one such outing with work shots.[80] On this occasion in 1931, the monteur took advantage of scaffolding near the left-wing Consortium of Publicity and Advertising Agencies (of which Reismann and Heartfield were members) to position three of the group's officers in a vertical grouping (fig. 6.30). Wieland Herzfelde later described his brother's role on this shoot as being similar to that of a film director.

In Reismann's photographs, we can indeed see the monteur at work: hustling his actors up a ladder, setting a wayward foot in place, nervously circling with his hands in pocket, and smiling back at the camera. After Heartfield's skillful montage of the last picture in this series, one could see the same men scaling a dollar sign on the cover of Upton Sinclair's *So macht man Dollars* (literally, *This Is How One Makes Dollars*; original title, *Mountain City*; plate 6). These staging shots also found their way into a "contest" that never saw print. But the competition's primary question reveals a great deal about Heartfield's technique: "What is happening here?" Among the conceivable answers listed are "film shoot," a possibility suggested by Heartfield's oversight and the well-dressed men, including Reismann, who appear to be actors.[81]

When not actually staging photographs, Heartfield searched for existing prints to appropriate. Witnesses recall his endless hours at the Ullstein Picture Service and other Berlin press archives where he sought the elusively perfect photo to fit a given idea. In some cases, a striking print—either appropriated or staged—changed his concept and even altered the book's title, as when *Mountain City* became *How to Make Dollars* or *The Wet Parade*, a novel about the end of American prohibition, became *Alkohol* (fig. 6.31).

But Heartfield, of course, was primarily a montage artist for whom the need to assert control over the photograph's recalcitrant and overabundant content authorized

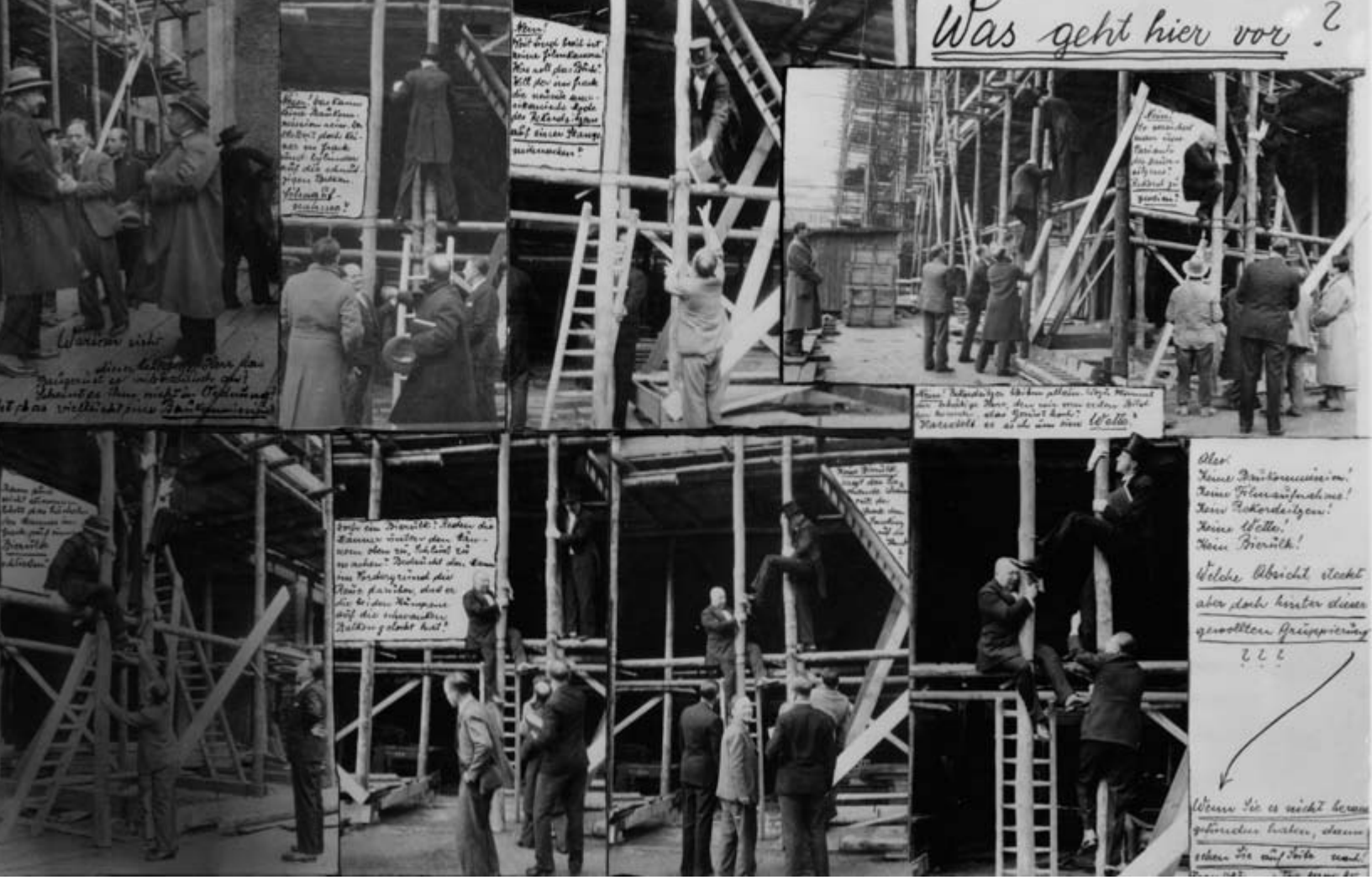


Fig. 6.30
John Heartfield and János Reismann, "Was geht hier vor?" (What's happening here?) Unpublished competition announcement, ca. 1931. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

extraordinary means generally not allowed even to the still photographer. Reismann describes the interwoven effort of picture taking or appropriating, montaging, and retouching as "a fierce struggle, repeated day after day, to realize his ideas and aims." A single composition required the equivalent of an entire movie studio, with Heartfield as director. As Reismann explains:

Taking photos for Heartfield, based on meticulous pencil sketches and always under his personal supervision, often covered sessions lasting many, many hours. He strove for nuances which I could no longer even perceive. While they [Reismann's photos] were being developed in the darkroom, he would stand at the enlarger till the prints were ready. I often was so tired that I couldn't stand, couldn't think, only wanted to sleep—but he would run home with the photos still wet, dry them, cut them out, and assemble them under a heavy glass plate. He would sleep for two hours, and at eight in the morning he would already sit with the [professional] retoucher for two, three, four, five, hours, his nerves stretched to the breaking point: It was always possible that the retoucher might still botch things up. Even when the montage was ready, the relief didn't last long: there were new plans, new ideas. He browsed about again in the photo archives for hours and



Fig. 6.31
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *Alkohol* (*The Wet Parade*; Berlin: Malik, 1932). For an alternative version of this cover, see fig. 6.38. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (91-B35838). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

> days on end. . . . Then, back to the photographers, all of whom he hated—including me—because they wouldn't perceive the nuances, from the photographer, to the retoucher, whom he had "drilled" himself. . . . [For Heartfield], an idea can never be striking enough, the formulation never precise enough, the montage never clear enough. Better to return to the archives, to the photographers, to the retoucher.[82]

Wound up like a spring and ready to snap both in the darkroom and in public, Heartfield demanded such perfection from his pictures that his collaborators could scarcely discern the nuances on which they were grounded. In working with these professionals, he could never achieve enough control over the photographic and montage process to satisfy himself. His book cover might have only one shot to attract and influence the browsing customer or striding passerby, and he wished to ensure this moment had the greatest possible impact.

This intense striving for mastery marked not just the final product but also Heartfield's new relationship with photography. As a Dadaist he had used the medium to reflect the unhinged chaos that revolution had unleashed on the old Wilhelmine order. Like his screaming voice and his punching fists, these images attacked with an unrestrained explosive power that—like the revolutionary moment itself—shocked, confused, and disoriented. But now the former Dadamonteur charged his photomontage with a far more specific task, which involved the allure of storytelling and the surprise of narrative denouements. To make the photograph perform in this way, he had not only to subject its contents and composition to tight control but to do the

same to himself. Both Heartfield and his book covers are nervous and stretched to the breaking point. But unlike the Dadamonteur and Dada montage, they no longer actually explode. Much like the film still, they remain in the tensely conflicting embrace of animation and stasis.[83]

THE SUCCESS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The key to these images was almost always their highly controlled deployment of montage. Heartfield's lessons from the language of cinema photography allowed him to describe identity and narrate a story in a controlled flash; montage then enabled him to juxtapose these pictorial terms and thereby suggest unexpected transformations of meaning and new ways to see the world. The surprising metamorphosis of his appropriated or commissioned photos pressed home political points with a stunning strike.

Behind what was often described as Heartfield's *plakativ* (pithy) appeal, of course, lies the allure of photography itself. He had emerged from Dada as an applied artist working across media, and he regularly deployed these varied media for his book covers. Malik's children's tales, for example, were illustrated with his colorful drawings. Other books boasted his ever-inventive typographic and graphic elements. But photography continually proved most successful at winning attention and—it seems—convincing merchants to place his books on display. It formed the basis of what Herbert Frenzel, editor of the journal *Gebrauchgraphik*, called Heartfield's "advertising persuasiveness" (*Werbeüberzeugung*).[84]

Merchants and customers alike prized the covers to such an extent that many returned dirty or damaged jackets to the press (with or without the book) in hopes of receiving a replacement. These problems occurred more frequently in the early days when Malik printed Heartfield's photos directly on absorbent cardboard, as with the first edition of *100%*. The glossy photography paper that the press turned to thereafter quickly became dirty as well, particularly over the white unprinted areas at the image's edge. But Malik had such success with Heartfield's photo covers, created "with scissors," as Hans Reimann wrote in 1927, that it felt compelled to probe new printing techniques.[85] It even tried varnishing the cover's surface to render them water- and stain-resistant, although with little success. The solution ultimately lay in spreading the image over the entire dust jacket, "to print the back cover and finally the entire book with photographs so as to leave the dirt less white surface to seize and, simultaneously, to win additional promotional space," as Herzfelde recalled.[86] By this time, in 1924, other publishers had also begun printing photographs on their covers. But, as mentioned above, Heartfield was the first to fully swath his volumes in emulsion.[87] This singularly important contribution to book design made the visual impact of his covers uniquely pronounced, particularly at a time of often banal or busy designs, as seen in the display windows of *Das gute Buchfenster*.

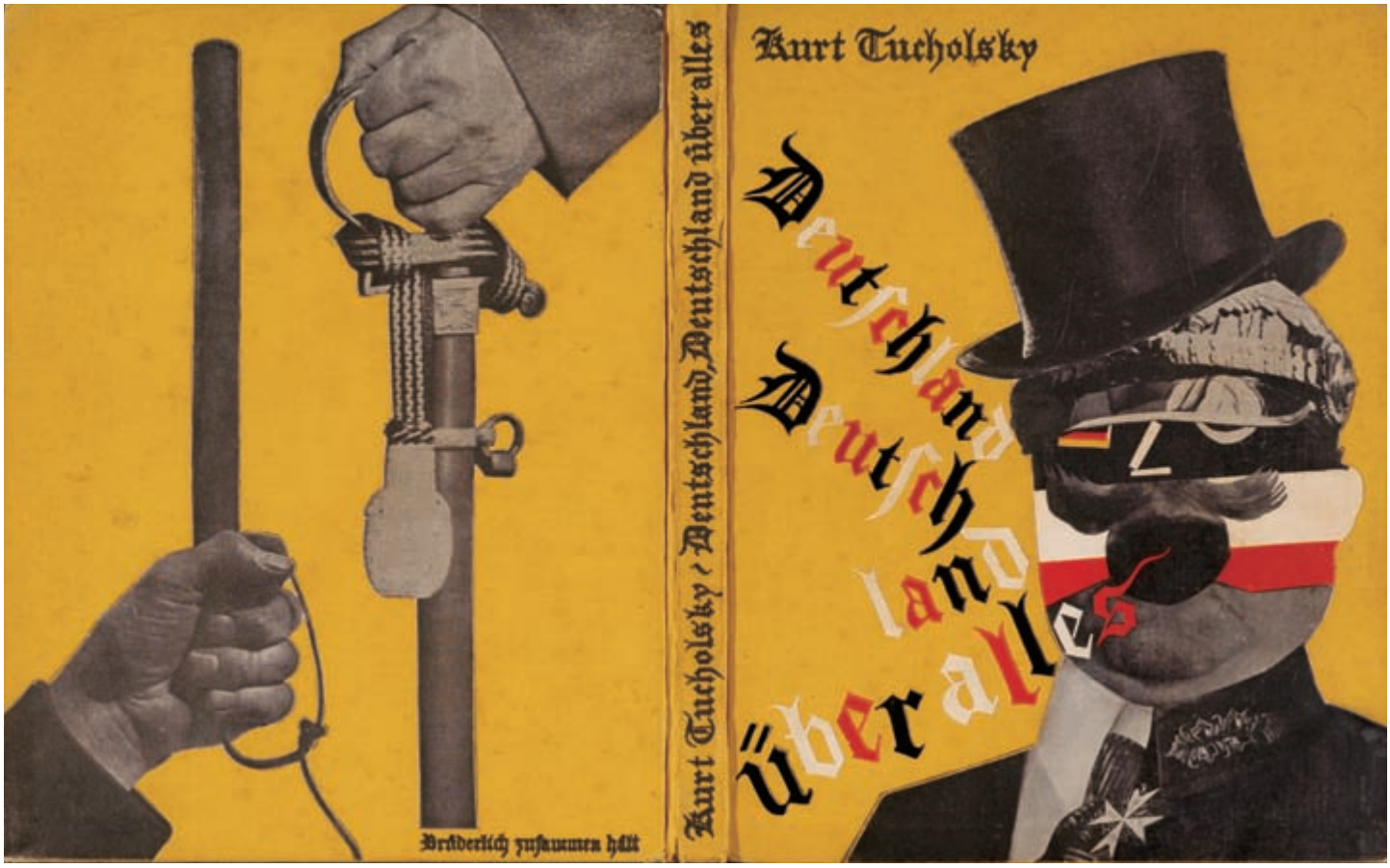

Brüderlich zusammen hält
Kurt Tucholsky / Deutschland, Deutschland über alles
Kurt Tucholsky
Deutschland Deutschland über alles

Plate 1
John Heartfield, book cover for Kurt Tucholsky, *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles* (*Germany, Germany above All Else*). Berlin: Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1929. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (84-B22133). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Palast-Theater am Zoo

Zuviel Humor, Paul **Göbel,** sächsischer Humorist, **Georg Neumüller,** süddeutscher Komiker, die Gesangssoubrette Lilly mit Hund Foxel, einen Steierischen tanzend — sehr schwach. **Margit und Lener** arbeiten gut im akrobatischen Akt: „Frisch gestrichen". **Bellonis** Wunder-Kakadus und die jetzt reichlich veraltete Lustspiel-Pantomime „der zerschossene Spiegel" — als Diener **Camillo Schwarz** annehmbarer Durchschnitt. Die Hauptnummer: **Josef Milos,** Darstellung berühmter Meisterwerke der Plastik, wirkt in dem perspektivisch beengten Raum nicht so gut wie vor wenigen Monaten **Ploetz-Larellas** zu nennen, graziös molchhaft als Handtänzerinnen und als biegsame Kautschukdamen. **Käthi Sandwina** (eben von der Ostfront zurückgekehrt!) . . . . auch keine Unbekannte . . . . zeigt uns wieder einmal ihren rosanen athletischen Körper . . . . bizarr und unbewußt masochistisch wirkt das Männchenkarussel, wobei ihr Körper die Axe ist . . . . **Arlo und Dolo** . . . Humor-Radfahrer, haben ihre Nummer noch nicht im ganzen so konzentriert und schlagend durchgearbeitet um als erstklassige Radnummer zu gelten —

Fritz Steidl, durchaus populärer deutscher Humorist, Tierstimmenimitator und Komiker, erntet natürlich stets größten Beifall (besonders bei dem Friedens-Couplet!)

Zirkus Albert Schumann.

Aus dem sehr abwechslungsreichen Programm sind besonders **Fato und May,** komische Fangkünstler hervorzuheben, eine Nummer allererßten Ranges. Fabelhafte Durcharbeitung von Grotesk-Wirkungen. Ferner die Spaßmacher **Adolf und Coco.** Die Zuhörer werden in die überaus einfache Handlung der Komik unweigerlich eingefangen, die Ruhe Adolfs ist der größten Wirkung sicher. Die vornehme Selbstbeherrschung des Direktors Albert Schumann in seinem hervorragend gearbeiteten Dreßurakt ist zu bekannt, als daß noch besondere Worte darüber zu verlieren wären. Gut sind auch die **4 Veras,** Drahtseilkünstlerinnen. Sie wirken in der Manege fast noch besser, als unlängst im Apollo-Theater. Das übrige ist Kriegsdurchschnitt. Dem großen Publikumg efallen **Turl Dambofers** Bayrische Alpen-Spiele. (Die Tauben auf der Szene schlagen gottseidank das Theater aus dem Feld). Die Pantomine **Halali,** Parforce-Schnitzeljagd, gehört nicht gerade zur besten Tradition des Unternehmens.

Neue Zeitschriften

Titel vermögen nicht immer den Inhalt zu vertuschen. Nach dem „Falken", der in der Tat eine Ente ist, braust jetzt der **„Orkan"** in die Literatur — als Brause. In der Ankündigung wird festgestellt, daß er mit dem „Sturm" im Austauschverhältnis steht, — ob das der „Sturm" weiß? Außer einer Reihe Gutachten über den Zweck der Kultur und des Orkans inbesondere, unter denen sich neben Leo Heller und sonstiger ähnlich veranlagter Herren merkwürdigerweise auch Paul Adler befindet — man lacht mehr, wenn als Mitarbeiter der künftigen Hefte Erich Mühsam angekündigt wird — werden aus dem Inventar der Verlage S. Fischer und Kurt Wolf Proben veröffentlicht und besprochen. Die Autoren erhalten je nach der Eigenart der vorerwähnten Verleger besonders abgestimmtes Lob. Zum Schluß heißt es wo: Besprochen werden die Publikationen der **gerade führenden** Verleger. An der Spitze marschiert die deutsche Handelsgesellschaft soundso, Abteilung Verlag, die neben dem Orkan gleich eine ganze Romanserie verlegen will. Die Aufmachung spottet jeder Beschreibung, jeder Marienkalender ist besser. Paul Adler, im Zeichen höchster „Deutschheit" — sagt er, hat das Wort!

Heinrich Michalski, Gründer von Beruf, hat mit der Europäischen Staats- und Wirtschaftszeitung Pech gehabt — er ist trotz Gründung ausgebootet worden. Dort sitzen jetzt andere Herren am Tisch. Es ist zu begrüßen, daß Heinrich bald was Neues gemanaged hat: **Die Drei!** Sehr bescheiden. Michalski sollte ruhig sagen: Die Tausend! Man lese aber dies Blatt, das in München mit irgendwelcher Politik und sonstwie erscheint. Man lese es um Heinrichs willen.

Soeben erschienen!

Soeben erschienen!

Soeben erschienen!





Plate 2 (opposite)
John Heartfield and George Grosz, *Soeben erschienen!* (*Just Out!*), on back cover of *Die neue Jugend*, June 1917. © 2011 The Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ.

Plate 3
John Heartfield, book cover for Ilya Ehrenburg, *Die Traumfabrik* (*The Dream Factory*; Berlin: Malik, 1931). Sammlung Jürgen und Waltraud Holstein, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Plate 4
John Heartfield, book cover for Franz Schulz, ed., *Eros* (Berlin: Rudolf Kaemmerer Verlag, 1925). Sammlung Jürgen und Waltraud Holstein, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Plate 5
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *Der Sumpf* (*The Jungle*; Berlin: Malik, 1924). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (92-B9137). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Plate 6
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *So macht man Dollars* (*Mountain City*; Berlin: Malik, 1931). Sammlung Jürgen und Waltraud Holstein, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

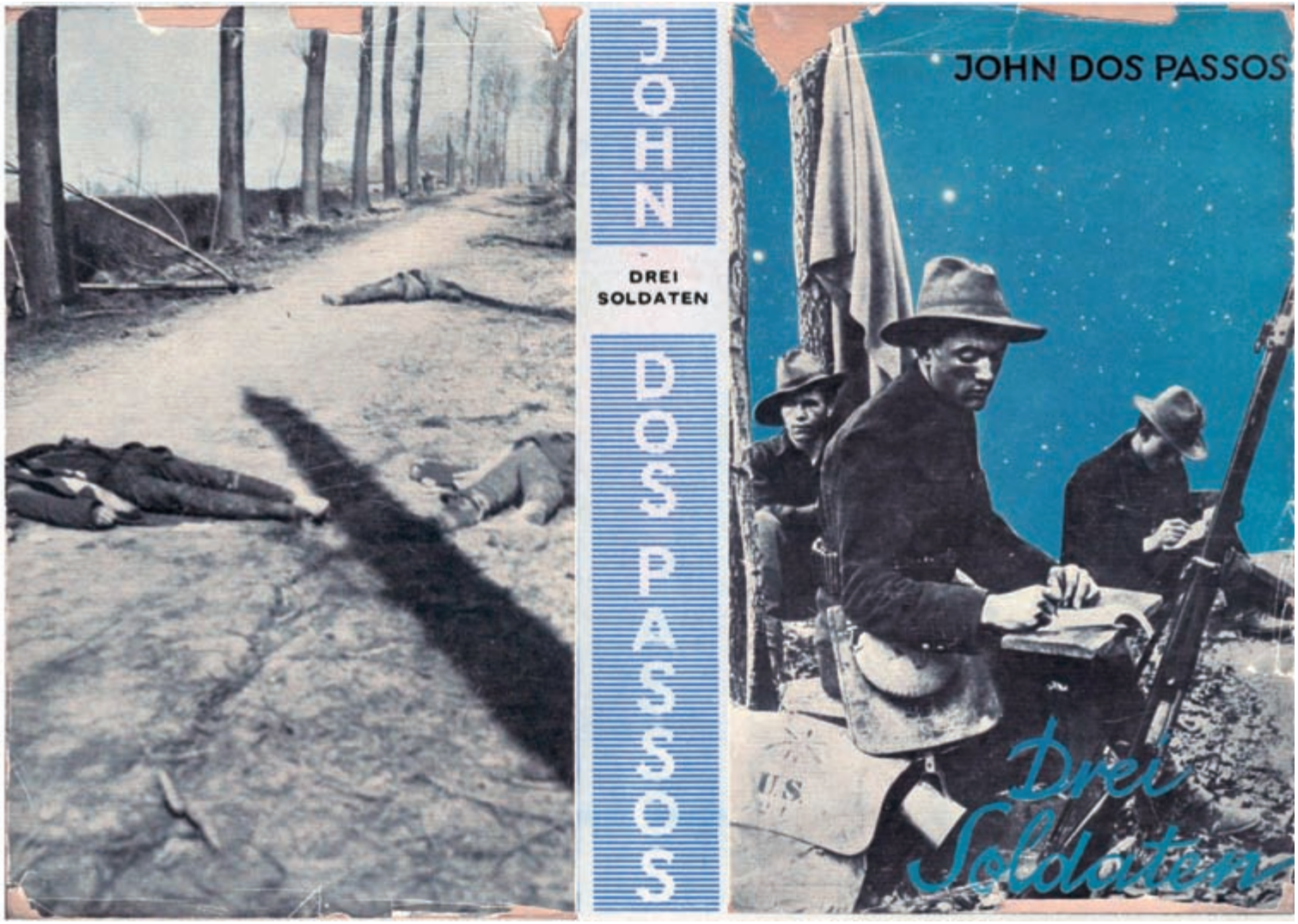


Plate 7
John Heartfield, book cover for John Dos Passos, *Drei Soldaten* (*Three Soldiers*; Berlin: Malik, 1928). Photobibliothek.ch. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Plate 8
John Heartfield, book cover for Ilya Ehrenburg, *Die heiligsten Güter* (*The Holiest Goods*; Berlin: Malik, 1931). Galerie Bassenge, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.


Da muss man ja lasziviosen fahnen
H. WANDT
EROTIK UND SPIONAGE IN DER ETAPPE GENT
SCHON WIEDER EINE
EINSCHNEIDENDE ZENSURMASSNAHME

Plate 9
John Heartfield, third version of book cover for Heinrich Wand, *Erotik und Spionage in der Etappe Gent* (*Eroticism and Espionage in the Ghent Command*; Vienna: Agis Verlag, ca. 1929). Sammlung Jürgen und Waltraud Holstein, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. For the original version and first revision, see figs. 6.36 and 6.37.

With this power he aimed to solicit the gaze and surprise expectations not with photography alone, but with a mix of near cinematic terms that revealed the book's political departure. His cover for Anna Meyenberg's 1922 novel *From Step to Step* (*Von Stufe zu Stufe*) shows a quaint valley village from above, while beyond the horizon pop the skyscrapers of New York's Times Square, complete with glowing avenues and a shining searchlight atop the *New York Times* building. Here the cozy rural and the spectacularly urban bump against each other in a composition described by Germans and Russians as "dialectical photomontage," a juxtaposition whose opposing terms revealed hidden facets of both.[88] Between these two contrasting vistas one can begin discerning the history of urbanization grounding Meyenberg's text.

A 1928 reprint of John Dos Passos's 1921 novel, *Three Soldiers*, which Malik originally published in 1922, tightens this approach. Its front cover bears an appropriated image of three US soldiers, two of whom are seen writing home from near the conflict's front (plate 7). The soldier in the foreground, framed between trees and an upright shotgun, appears to let his mind wander into his text, much as we gaze past him into the starry night of providence. This close framing and his montaging against the deep night sky set the stage for the book's beginning, while the back cover, featuring three casualties on a desolate road, reveals the soldiers' ultimate fate. Trees against the morning sky frame corpses on a corridor of death. "Thus arises not so much a thematically enumerative expression, but an antithetical one," explained Herzfelde of this pictorial-narrative dialectic. Such an unsparing contrast of photographs correspondingly "expresses the realist character of the book" and its dismantling of the romanticized image of soldiers.[89] Indeed, the apparent precision of photography itself, particularly under Heartfield's controlling hands, anticipates the style of Dos Passos's straightforward text, a near clinical mode that itself foresaw Erich Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* (*All Quiet on the Western Front*, 1929).

In 1936 Heartfield compressed a similar "antithetical" contrast into a front cover picture showing a worker (from above) on a curving canal bank. The man thus looks into the endless abyss (*Der Abgrund*)—rather than flowing water—of fascism (1936; fig. 6.32). Through appropriated and tightly cropped photography, Heartfield distills the moment when a despondent—and likely unemployed—worker contemplates joining the fascist ranks. Through "dialectical" montage he transforms the instant's contours, showing brownshirt masses as the equivalent of water in which the man might drown. Slipping into the channel of reaction is thus cast as the equivalent of suicide. As the bank curves slowly around the man, his induction-cum-drowning begins to take place before our eyes. Meanwhile, the frantically scrawled title in red seems to cry his appeal.

Heartfield used montage to maintain similarly tight control over narrative and character identity in his cover for Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Holiest Goods: A Novel about the Big Interests* (*Die Heiligsten Güter. Roman der grossen Interessen*, 1931; plate 8). Here he pulled out all the stops. The front cover suggests an alluring but incendiary



Fig. 6.32
John Heartfield, book cover for Oskar Maria Graf, *Der Abgrund* (*The Abyss*; Prague: Malik, 1936). Galerie Bassenge, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

(perhaps literally, given the matches) mix of war, religion, and money. Columns of coins rise alongside the sort of battle trophy Grosz had claimed to be manufacturing when, posing as a "curious merchant from Holland," he first met Herzfelde. The back cover shows a political chessboard on which various character types, from the prostitute to the cleric, figure as power brokers and pawns. The upward sweep of the diagonally positioned board suggests the cruel dynamic of this game.

Heartfield could offer such photomontaged allure and political twists between the covers as well. The front and back exteriors of Jakov Dorfmann's 1927 *In the Land of Record Figures* (*Im Lande der Rekordzahlen*) sport a straightforward but modified American flag (fig. 6.33). But the book's endpapers, just inside these covers, feature stunning photomontages whose harried form recalls the monteur's Dada pictures (figs. 6.34 and 6.35). Over these two spreads, American actuality explodes with money, guns, lynchings, and beauty contests. Dollar coins allegorizing the country's

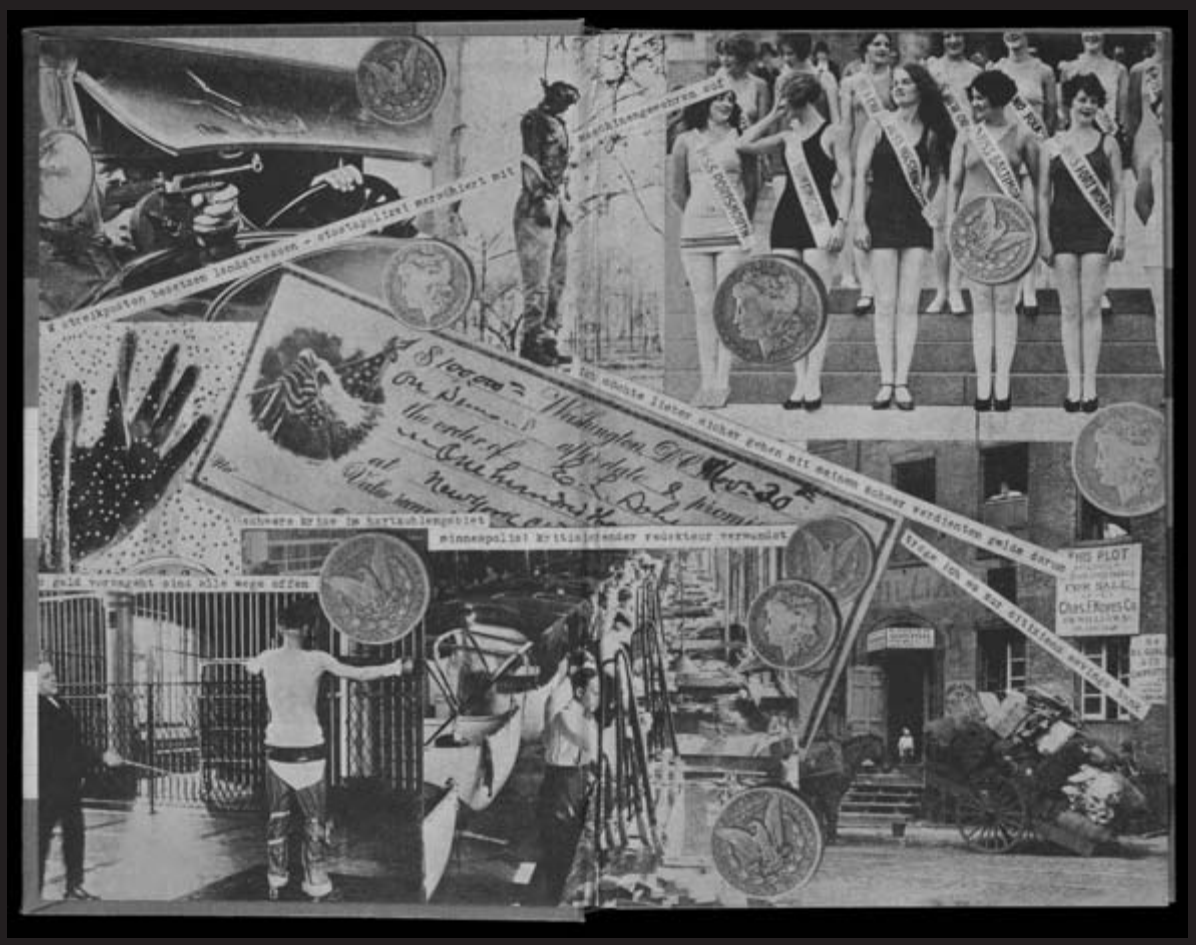


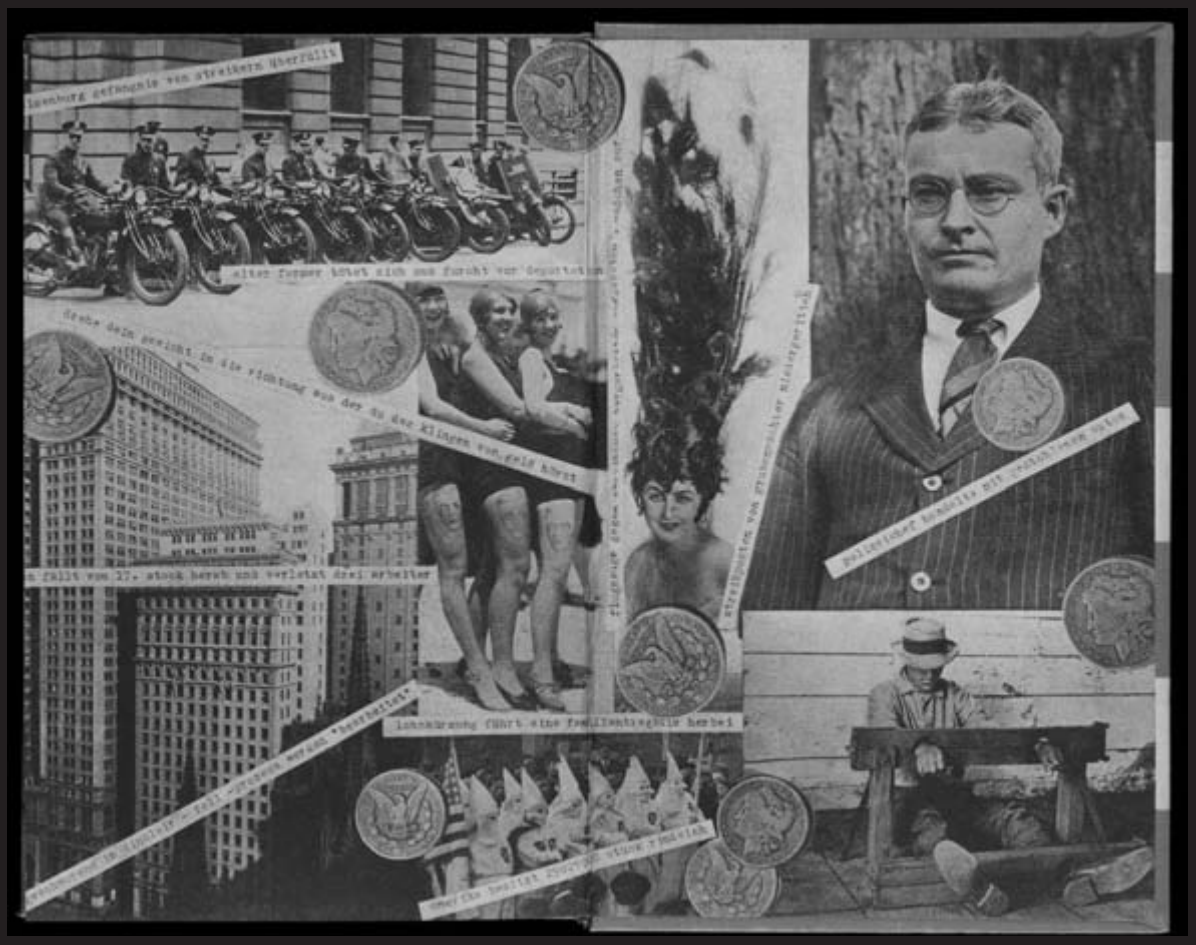
Fig. 6.33
John Heartfield, book cover for Jakov Dorfmann, *Im Lande der Rekordzahlen. Amerikanische Reiseskizzen* (*In the Land of Record Figures: Sketches of Travel through America*; Berlin: Malik, 1927). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (92-B10304). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

"record figures" float above the scenes and provide the implicit catalyst for all this chaos. Meanwhile, news flashes dart across like missiles in response. In the front composition, reading from top-left to bottom-right, the first darting text screams "strike posts occupy highways—government police deploy with machine guns." An armored windshield opens to reveal a man with just such a machine gun, shooting toward a lynched figure and—in another sign of race—rows of white bathing beauties. A heavily pierced surface, in which the silhouette of a hand appears, suggests the penetration of gun violence while under a canted bank check, a prisoner is whipped, auto workers toil on an assembly line, and a family in arrears on its rent sees its possessions piled atop a cart. "Minneapolis: critical editor wounded," cries another of the news flashes.

The composition at the back of the book presents a similar juxtaposition of police force, corporate power, Klan-fueled racism, and harsh criminal "corrections." Further propelling this spiraling injustice are photographs of a corrupt politician who "deals with stolen cars" and more female beauties, one of whom wears a towering headdress of peacock plumes. In these montages, as in the book's reportage, America is a stunning confusion of low-brow culture, prosperous growth, and violent power. One can only imagine the impact these possibly exposed interior pages had on passersby who might peer into a bookshop display.

By soliciting scandal, Heartfield's covers sometimes became news stories themselves. On several occasions, the monteur actually encouraged public consternation by making highly visible changes to his montaged jackets. His 1928 design for Heinrich Wandt's *Eroticism and Espionage in the Ghent Command* (*Erotik und Spionage*


Washington D.C. Mar 20
THIS PLOT
FOR SALE
Chas. F. Rowes Co.



in der Etappe Gent; fig. 6.36), commissioned by Vienna's Agis Verlag, features a closely cropped stock image of a corpulent Prussian officer wearing the Iron Cross, his head outside the picture's frame, and his hand stroking the stocking-clad thigh of a smiling prostitute. Her spying twin on the back cover, meanwhile, gazes furtively outward as she riffles through the officer's papers during his moment of heated desire. The resulting uproar over this "defamation of the Reichswehr" became so great that Heartfield gladly reissued the cover with a text block over the first woman's lap reading "Here the censor has intervened!" ("*Hier hat die Zensur eingegriffen!*"; fig. 6.37). The literal meaning of *eingreifen* is "to put a hand in," suggesting that the censor is reaching into the woman's lap in place of the Prussian officer.

When this alteration only stoked the uproar and led to a court judgment against the Agis Press, Heartfield responded with a third version that positioned a curious judge with tinted glasses cutting through the paper on which the woman's lap is printed (plate 9). "Here one must really step in and put a stop to things," read the suggestive words radiating from this lantern-jawed figure clad as a jurist. Here was Heartfield's experience with sonorous film animation on full display. Over the course of this controversy, Heartfield's alterations served as news flashes that nourished a full-on spectacle. Beyond that, his series of pictures and—just as importantly—the book's reportage on Germany's morally hypocritical military elite, provoked a national debate. To a certain extent, then, Heartfield's sequence of altered covers played off precisely the public anxiety with sex, power, and military secrets that the book's text chronicles.

Fig. 6.34
John Heartfield, photomontage for front endpaper in Jakov Dorfmann, *Im Lande der Rekordzahlen. Amerikanische Reiseskizzen* (*In the Land of Record Figures: Sketches of Travel through America*; Berlin: Malik, 1927). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (92-B10304). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

For Upton Sinclair's *Wet Parade* (1931), rechristened *Alkohol* (1932; fig. 6.31), Heartfield had himself photographed as a drunkard who, while throwing up, supports himself on a colossal Black & White brand scotch bottle rather than a lamppost. The bottle is seamlessly montaged onto a Berlin street, the reflections on its surface consistent with the light in the surrounding context, and its label left perfectly legible. Heartfield, here embodying the typical vision of an alcoholic, transforms his bottle-crutch into the very cause of his condition in this film still-cum-candid street photo. Enraged by this association with sloppy drunkenness and left-wing writing, the London distillery sued Malik for infringement of copyright. Heartfield quickly responded with a revision that reproduced a portion of the resulting judgment against Malik within the form of the bottle. He then arranged for this text to be pasted directly over the cover montage on the remaining unsold books. The new composition was then covered in an early version of plastic laminate (fig. 6.38). This too irked the distillery, James Buchanan and Company, forcing Heartfield to ink out the names of the company and its whiskey from the reproduced text, an alteration to the last batch of unsold books that effectively created a third version.

Media coverage of such changes to book covers transformed the odd realism of Heartfield's images and the reportage style of Malik's books into real news stories that themselves made the volumes more contemporary and tendentious. Heartfield's pictorial disruptions of identity and historical associations through montage, in

Fig. 6.35
John Heartfield, photomontage for back endpaper in Jakov Dorfmann, *Im Lande der Rekordzahlen. Amerikanische Reiseskizzen* (*In the Land of Record Figures: Sketches of Travel through America*; Berlin: Malik, 1927). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (92-B10304). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Fig. 6.36
John Heartfield, first version of book cover for Heinrich Wandt, *Erotik und Spionage in der Etappe Gent* (*Eroticism and Espionage in the Ghent Command*; Vienna: Agis Verlag, 1928). Sammlung Jürgen und Waltraud Holstein, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Fig. 6.37
John Heartfield, second version of book cover for Heinrich Wand, *Erotik und Spionage in der Etappe Gent* (*Eroticism and Espionage in the Ghent Command*; Vienna: Agis Verlag, ca. 1929). Akademie der Künste, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

other words, had become "political weapons," as Walter Benjamin called them, or "precise shots," in Tret'iakov's phrasing. Such censorship scandals and pictorial sorties helped amplify a given novel's impact on the public sphere. With great satisfaction, Wieland later remarked that these affairs had become a font of free publicity for his cash-strapped press.[90]

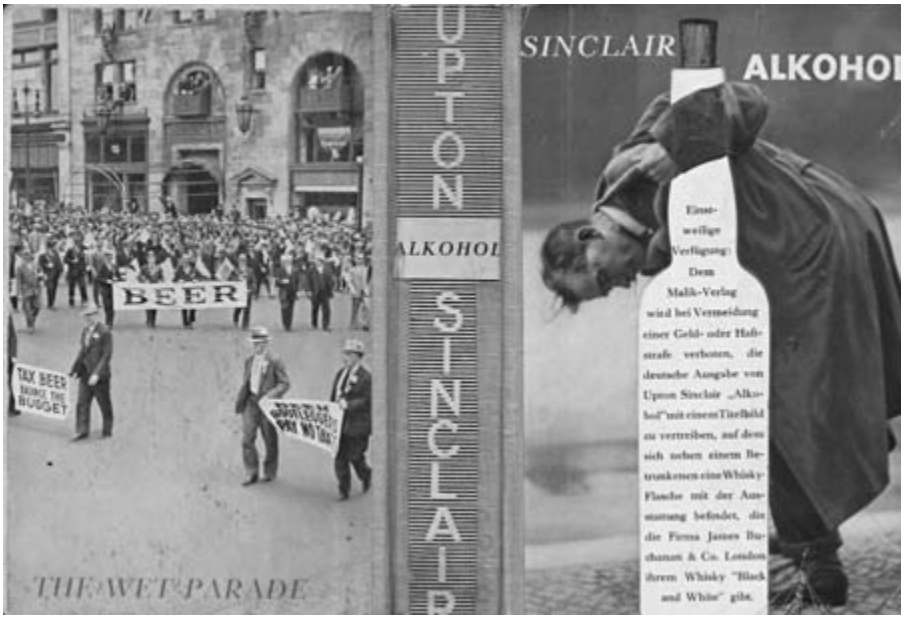


Fig. 6.38
John Heartfield, book cover for Upton Sinclair, *Alkohol* (*The Wet Parade*; Berlin: Malik, 1932), after alteration. For original version, see fig. 6.31. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (91-B35838). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

PHOTOGRAPHY, MEMORY, AND AFFECT

Siegfried Kracauer's 1927 essay "Photography" begins with a quick observation that offers powerful insight into Heartfield's book covers of the same moment. "This is what the film diva looks like," he begins, referring to a photograph reproduced on the cover of an illustrated magazine. "The bangs, the seductive position of the head, and the twelve eyelashes right and left—all these details, diligently recorded by the camera, are in their proper place, a flawless appearance."[91] At his essay's outset, Kracauer seems to acknowledge photography's useful capacity to capture the innumerable minutiae of the visible world. In the case of the diva, these details are fashioned by professionals—posture consultants, makeup artists, and publicists—who control every aspect of the star's appearance. The results of their hard work, in turn, direct our attention as viewers.

Yet here Kracauer proffers a somewhat counterintuitive point. Photography, he asserts, provides *far* too much detail. As a consequence, it assaults the spectator's capacity to filter visual information and extract the lasting impression of memory. Even after the fetishistic distillation of the diva's physical features into exaggerated signs of feminine beauty, this (apparently) staged publicity picture overwhelms human cognition with the abundant data it cannot erase. Making the problem worse is the countless number of such photos in Weimar's famously flooded photographic culture. Such an abundance of unfiltered visual data, Kracauer warned, threatens to "sweep away" the filtering "dams" of selection that make human memory possible. With this proposition in mind, might we suggest that the success of Heartfield's pictures lay in addressing precisely this excess? Could it be that his laboriously pro-

duced and heavily controlled montages struck their audience so effectively because they arose through the human filtering that Kracauer worried photography (both singularly and collectively) overwhelmed?

Heartfield's post-Dada projects ultimately consisted of fashioning what Sergei Tret'iakov called "social vision."[92] His pictures taught audiences how to adopt radical eyes whose piercing vision could perceive a social reality that Weimar's surface culture generally occluded. A significant part of this optical pedagogy lay in learning to filter what one saw. In this active mode of vision, one had to decipher the present for long-term mnemonic retention. In this way, a properly perceived actuality could inform radical consciousness. Indeed, what Kracauer in his essay suggests as an antidote to Weimar's flood of photographs sounds very much like the "social vision" taught by Heartfield's photomontaged book covers. Human memory, Kracauer explains, retains "what is given only in so far as it has significance" to the individual. This selection results from "the repression, falsification, and emphasis of certain parts of [an] object" based on personal "disposition and purposes." The memory image distilled from these fragments is what Kracauer calls a monogram, a figure saturated with personal meaning and capable of weathering the dissolving effects of time. Compared to the mechanically rendered excess of photography, he notes, human "memory images appear to be fragments." By contrast, and "from the perspective of memory, photography appears as a jumble that consists partly of garbage."[93]

Heartfield's obsessive control, selection, and elimination, as applied to photographs, removed this "garbage" and thereby turned ideological selection into a compositional process of politicized human memory. Like the painter who paints history, Heartfield had to destroy what Kracauer calls "the mere surface coherence offered by photography" and thereby negate the *likeness* it achieved.[94] By extending the logic of cinema photography into his practice, Heartfield developed a montage technique whose fragment-based selection and control remained unencumbered by the medium's task to being true to likeness. Instead it was true to something far more emotional and forceful: affect.

From the moment he began working with photography, Heartfield distrusted the medium's power of visual authentication. Despite the photographic image's apparent status as an imprint of the real, he doubted what Leah Dickerman describes as the medium's "testimonial force."[95] But with suitable modifications, photography could bypass its damaged testimonial capacity and instead build a highly emotional appeal based on deformation, exaggeration, and montage-based juxtaposition. Heartfield built his images on just this principle. Using the book cover as a training ground, he fine-tuned these unrealistic but still very much photographic tools of emotion to adapt his audience to things most of its members had sensed but not seen, or had understood only intuitively.

Fortunately, Heartfield stood in a unique position to achieve this task. From the moment he and Grosz fashioned the montages for *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball*, he had seen standard photography as primarily attentive to misleading surfaces. Having

long distrusted the medium's fidelity, he had little objection to producing photographic images at odds with the visible world. Radically removing photography from its relation with visible reality freed him to fashion a powerfully affective truth instead, "to link the somatic and the psychic in deeply moving combination," as Thy Phu and Linda Steer have recently written of photography's affective potential.[96] Here lay the root of the medium's persuasion in his hands. For Heartfield, visible reality and photography did not have to correspond if the latter were to have a powerfully emotional impact. It was specifically the book cover, however, that taught him how to control and sharpen this impact.

EPILOGUE

THE ARTIST OF GERMAN COMMUNISM

1926–1933

HEARTFIELD'S MATURE PHOTOMONTAGE, AS HE DEVISED IT FOR HIS BOOK COVERS, met with enthusiastic acclaim. Critics such as Adolf Behne, Hans Reimann, Jan Tschichold, Kurt Tucholsky, and Herbert Frenzel praised his photomontaged jackets and continually remarked on their unusually striking power. Publishers other than Malik felt much the same and often hired the monteur to produce images for the surfaces of their own tomes. By 1927 Heartfield's captivating books covers had led other applied artists to follow his example. Suddenly their work also began to emerge from largely leftist and avant-garde book publishers. By the decade's end, dust jackets by famous artists such as László Moholy-Nagy and Sasha Stone, or less famous designers such as Paul Urban and Max Keiler, filled bookstore window displays around the country.[1] The "photo binding" (*Photoeinband*) that Tschichold gave Heartfield credit for having invented had now conquered Weimar's book market and even migrated to the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and France, among other countries.[2] It also propelled Heartfield to national and international prominence.

By 1927 his increasingly popular photomontage work had begun migrating to other surfaces as well. It occasionally graced the pages of *Der Knüppel*, the KPD's satirical journal, which he edited with Grosz (fig. E.1), and other party publications such as *Arena* (its unofficial and irregularly appearing sports magazine). His increasingly close work with the party's Agitprop Department led to special productions such as his striking *Face of Fascism* for the one-off magazine *Italy in Chains* (1928; fig. E.2) and numerous images for the annual *Worker's Calendar*. The first of these two showed Mussolini's colossal face morphing into a skull as the actions of a porcine businessman, Catholic clerics, and rampaging blackshirts led to slaughtered

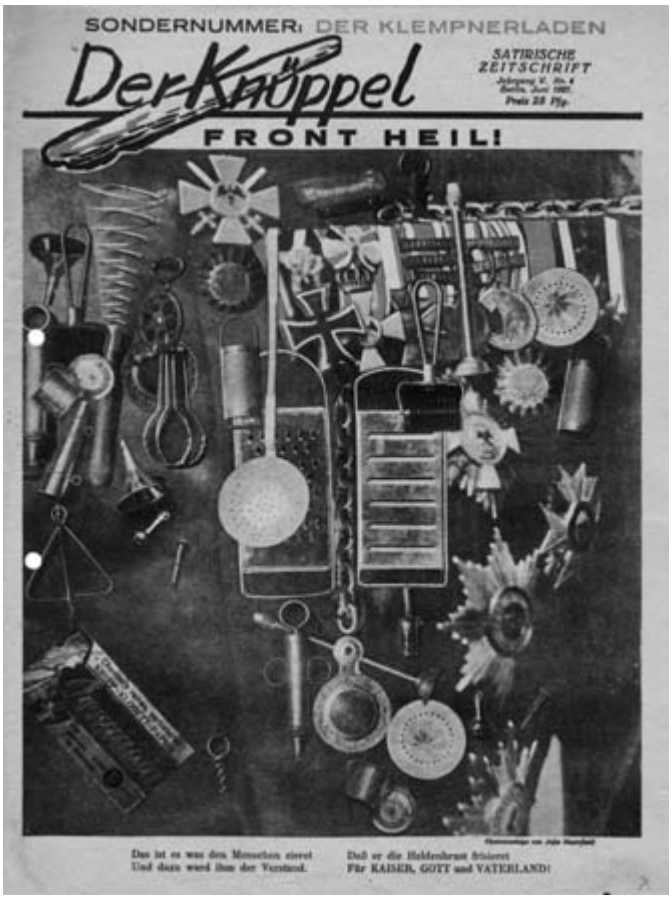

SONDERNUMMER! DER KLEMPNERLADEN
Der Knüppel
SATIRISCHE ZEITSCHRIFT
FRONT HEIL!
Das ist es was den Menschen ziert
Und dazu wird ihm der Verstand.
Daß er die Heldenbrust tätowiert
Für KAISER, GOTT und VATERLAND!

Fig. E.1
John Heartfield, *Front Heil!* (*The Front, Hail!*), on cover of *Der Knüppel* (*The Cudgel*) 5, no. 4 (June 1927). Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Fig. E.3
John Heartfield, *5 Finger hat die Hand* (*5 Fingers Has the Hand*), on cover of *Die rote Fahne* 11, no. 112 (May 13, 1928). The remainder of the text reads, "With 5 you seize the enemy! Vote list 5, Communist Party!" SAPMO (Stiftun Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganizationen der DDR), Bundesarchiv, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.


ITALIEN in Ketten
DAS GESICHT DES FASCHISMUS
„Ich werde in den nächsten 15 Jahren das Gesicht Italiens so verändern, daß es niemand wieder erkennt."

Fig. E.2
John Heartfield, *Das Gesicht des Faschismus* (*The Face of Fascism*), in *Italien im Ketten* (*Italy in Chains*), 1928. The caption at the bottom reads, "In the next 15 years I will so change the face of Italy that no one will recognize it"; Mussolini's signature follows. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



Fig. E.4
Georg Pahl (Aktuelle-Bilder-Centrale), "an interesting Communist Party wall poster in the streets of Berlin at the time of the great May 20 Reichstag election (likely posted on the façade of KPD Berlin headquarters, the Karl Liebknecht House)," 1928. Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

innocents at the bottom right. In 1928 his equally powerful montages even began to enliven front pages of the otherwise pictorially bland KPD daily *Die rote Fahne* (*The Red Banner*; fig. E.3). One particular image, *Five Fingers Has the Hand*, also jumped from walls throughout urban Germany during the heated 1928 Reichstag electoral campaign (fig. E.4). These were sensational pictures that taught viewers how to perceive the world beneath photographed appearances. In some instances, however, Heartfield also plied entirely uncritical photomontages that monumentalized German workers and their heroes in troublingly bombastic ways (fig. E.5). In 1927 his frequent book cover work for the New German Press, which was run by Soviet-sponsored press magnate Willi Münzenberg, led to the appearance of his colorful and enthusiastically affirmative photomontages in that press's magazines, including *Das neue Russland* (*New Russia*; fig. E.6). Here a radio speaker adorned with the Soviet red star faces the globe and blares out news of the heroic construction Russia has achieved in the past ten years. This relationship with Münzenberg's concern led to Heartfield's blockbuster photo book *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles* (1929; plate 1), produced in collaboration with Kurt Tucholsky (who had earlier praised his images), and, starting in 1930, his contributions to the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte*



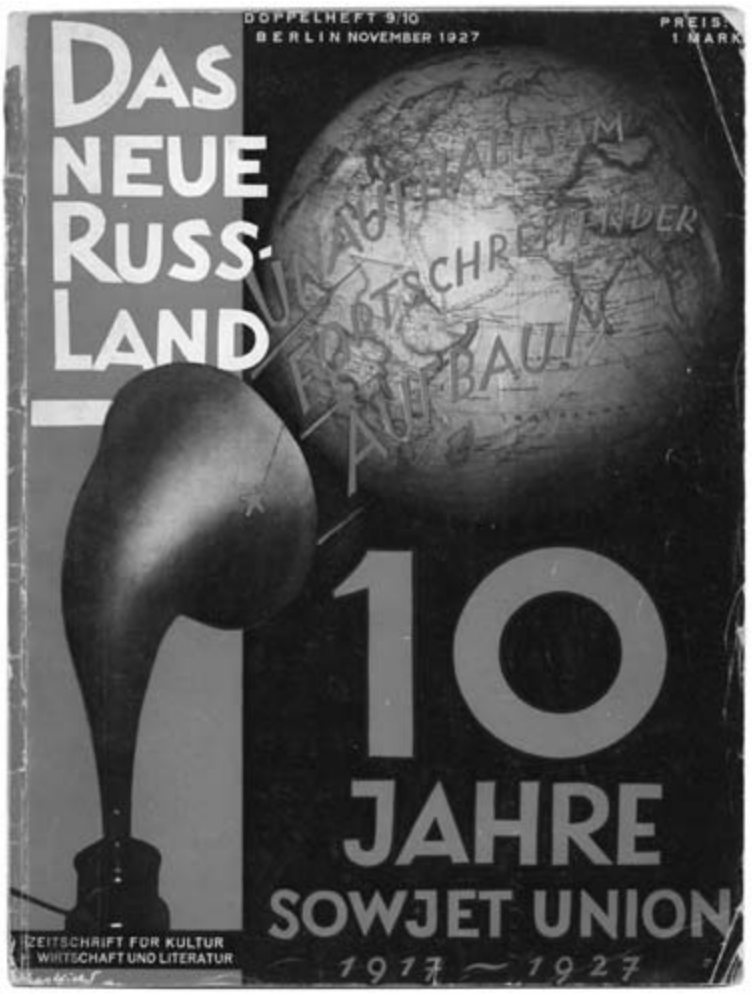


Fig. E.5 (left)
John Heartfield, *Klassenkampf gegen Koalition! Rot Front im roten Berlin!* (*Class Battle against the Coalition! Red Front in Berlin!*), on cover of *Die rote Fahne* 11, no. 124 (Sunday, May 27, 1928). SAPMO (Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganizationen der DDR), Bundesarchiv, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Fig. E.6 (right)
John Heartfield, *10 Jahre Sowjet Union 1917–1927* (*10 Years of the Soviet Union, 1917–1927*), on cover of *Das neue Russland* (*New Russia*), no. 9/10 (November 1927). Galerie Bassenge, Berlin. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Zeitung, which would make him world famous. In his inaugural contribution to the *AIZ*, Heartfield announced his new role as a media and photo critic (fig. E.7, right). Here he would prevent his readers from being blinded by the "stultifying bandages" of his opponents' papers, some of which even misrepresented details as trivial as a painter's skirt (fig. E.7, left).

In all of these cases, Heartfield used the lessons learned from book covers to produce jolting pictorial narratives based in the contemporary world. With distilled photographs and sharply controlled contrasts, he not only communicated these stories with stunning clarity but suggested that reality and its photographic reproduction were scarcely what they appeared to be at first flush. His selective and affect-rich "social vision," as Tret'iakov called it, now became the standard for radical leftist agitprop, both in Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

But behind these pictures, which themselves labored to reveal the truth behind appearances, a striking development was taking place. Heartfield's photomontage was becoming *the* form of an emerging, radical-left proletarian art. At the outset of his book cover project, painters like Grosz, Schlichter, Grethe Jürgens, and Otto Nagel were trying to devise a specifically proletarian art based in the realist

representation of the life lived by Germany's working poor. By 1924 this had led to the *First General German Art Exhibition* in Moscow, a vast show that announced the cultural apex of these largely depressing pictures. From this point forward, a proletarian art of painting based on the standards of fine art slowly became moribund in the larger world of Weimar's political imagery. But this was also the year that Heartfield helped form the Rote Gruppe (Red Group), which defined a broader vision for communist-affiliated proletarian art, one in which propaganda posters, art education for party activists, and exhibition work, as well as painting, all played a role.[3] Over the following years, while "misery painting" (as artist Otto Nagel called it) was received with increasing consternation, agitprop art offered alluring and positive images. Under this rubric, images were conceived as blunt weapons capable of disseminating information on a mass scale while also thrashing opponents and heroizing partisans in an emotionally persuasive manner. Agitprop also strongly associated communism with the modernity of photography. Working like a busy ant on the overlooked "wallflower," the book cover, Heartfield had devised a formula for proletarian art based in the literary reportage that his photomontages wrapped and promoted.

It was this sort of highly focused picture that exploded onto the political scene when his photomontages began appearing on KPD and other communist-affiliated publications. His arrival as one of the broader culture's primary artists was then conclusively announced by the landmark *Film and Foto* exhibition of 1929, an event that gave him an entire room to fill. This was a luxury afforded only to him and to the famous former Bauhaus professor László Moholy-Nagy, who had played an important role in organizing the exhibition. The room, which Heartfield himself seems to have installed, allowed the monteur to stage what was essentially a retrospective of his work.[4] Although KPD party leaders remained famously nervous about these untraditional avant-garde images even as they deployed them, a critic closely associated with the party finally declared their great potential in 1932. In his essay "Photomontage as a Weapon in the Class Struggle," Hungarian émigré Alfred Kemény described Heartfield's work as "classic." "He pioneered the use of photomontage for book jackets and in the design of political picture books," Kemény explained. "After years of stubborn and consistent work, he won the adoption of the line which he considered the most appropriate for the proletarian liberation struggle."[5] Yet this was an adoption based not just on his photomontage's political standard but on its "high artistic . . . value." What had once appeared as an agitating poster in the Malik bookstore was now *the* art of German communism. Famously declaring that radical citizens must "paint with the photo" and "write with the photo" in order to take command of their world through its representation, Heartfield had arrived at his creative apex.





Fig. E.7
Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung 9, no. 6 (1930): 102–3. On the right-hand page is John Heartfield's first photomontage for the magazine, *Ich bin ein Kohlkopf. Kennt ihr meine Blätter?* (*I'm a Cabbage Head. Do You Recognize My Leaves?*). On the left: "Nanu! Zweimal dasselbe???" ("Oops! Two Times the Same???"), by unidentified members of the design staff. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (87-S194). © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 János Reismann (pseud. Wolf Reiss), "Als ich mit John Heartfield zusammenarbeitete," in *John Heartfield. Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit. Selbstzeugnisse, Erinnerungen, Interpretationen*, ed. Roland März and Gertrud Heartfield (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1981), 188. Translations throughout this book are my own unless otherwise noted.

2 The text at the top right corner of this composition reads, "X-ray by John Heartfield."

3 Interview with John Heartfield, 1967, in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 464.

4 The assistant was named Vladimir Hnizdo. See "Vladimir Hnizdo arbeitete mit Heartfield in Prag zusammen," in *Montage: John Heartfield vom Club Dada zur* Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung, ed. Eckhard Siepmann (Berlin: Elefanten Press Verlag, 1977), 126.

5 Here I draw from Thy Phu and Linda Steer's extraordinary introduction to a recent discussion of photography and affect. I also rest heavily, at this point and in the following pages, on Sabine Kriebel's extraordinary discussion of the apparent seamlessness of Heartfield's mature photomontage. She stresses how his re-presented photographic world ran in parallel to the phenomenal one. Using the medical and cinematic term "suture," Kriebel explains that Heartfield employed this smooth alternative to incorporate the embodied and psychological subject into his pictures, with the aid of numerous strategies, ranging from quick legibility to laughter and disgust. Where Kriebel stresses Heartfield's fully formed montages, I stress the relation with photography that brought him to this technique in the first place. Heartfield, I explain, arrived at his mature and seamless strategy by first rejecting the traditional print as inadequate and then slowly reinventing the medium as an affective means of communication. See Phu and Steer, "Introduction," *Photography and Culture* 2, no. 3 (November 2009): 236, and Sabine Kriebel, "Manufacturing Discontent: John Heartfield's Mass Medium," *New German Critique*, no. 107 (Summer 2009), 53–88.

6 From a statement Heartfield made in 1930. See März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 185.

7 For more on the photomontage of his political opponents, see Sabine Kriebel, "Photomontage in the Year 1932: John Heartfield and the National Socialists," *Oxford Art Journal* 31, no. 1 (March 2008): 97–127.

8 On the historical association between photography's realism and its social mission, see Jorge Ribalta, "Molecular Documents: Photography in the Post-Photographic Era, or How Not to Be Trapped into False Dilemmas," in *The Meaning of Photography*, ed. Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimpson (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2008), 178–85.

9 Wieland Herzfelde, *John Heartfield. Leben und Werk,* 3rd ed. (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1976), 17.

10 Grosz and Heartfield's brother both witnessed flash moments of frontline combat that strongly affected them. But Otto Dix experienced nearly the full run of World War I at the front, while many other artists, such as Franz Marc, fell victim to the conflict's mechanized violence.

11 See "Francis D. Klingender: Diskussion mit John Heartfield über Dadaismus und Surrealismus. 1944," in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 60.

12 Sergei Tret'iakov, *John Heartfield: A Monograph* (Moscow: ISOGIZ [Moscow State Publishing House], 1936), translated into German and partially republished in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 297–98. This translation from Russian to English is by Devin Fore.

13 Matthew Teitelbaum, "Preface," in *Montage and Modern Life, 1919–1942*, ed. Teitelbaum (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1992), 7.

14 Christopher Phillips, "Introduction," in Teitelbaum, *Montage and Modern Life*, 31.

15 For an excellent account of modernist photography and photomontage as a rational educator of the senses, forged by engineer-like artists, see Herbert Molderings, "The Modernist Cause: New Vision and New Objectivity 1919–1945," in *Collection Photographs: A History of Photography through the Collections of the Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne*, ed. Quentin Bajac and Clément Chéroux (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2007), 97–114.

16 An example of one of these fine histories is Maud Lavin, *Cut with a Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993). See also the collected essays in Herbert Moderings, *Der Moderne der Fotografie* (Hamburg: Philo Fine Arts, 2008).

17 Here I have in mind young photographers and artists such as Marianne Brandt, László Moholy-Nagy, Andreas Feininger, Helmar Lerski, Lotte Jacobi, Oskar Nerlinger, and Alice Lex-Nerglinger.

18 Interview with John Heartfield, in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 29–31.

CHAPTER ONE

1 Kurt Tucholsky, "Mehr Fotographien," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 1 (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1960), 47.

2 Ibid., 47. The exhibition likely traveled from Munich, where the carpenter's union had held a conference on injuries among its members the previous year. In Berlin the exhibition ran from May 23 to June 21, 1912, in the Berliner Gewerkschaftshaus.

3 *Unfallgefahren und Unfallschutz in der Holzindustrie. Verhandlungen der Konferenz der Maschinenarbeiter, Schneidemüller und Säger am 12., 13. u. 14. Nov. 1911 in München* (Berlin: Verlagsanstalt des Deutschen Holzarbeiter-Verbandes, GmbH, 1912).

4 In a sense, Tucholsky was not fully uninitiated. As a contributing art and literary critic for *Vorwärts*, his charge likely demanded political readings of cultural affairs.

5 Heartfield posted this declaration above his exhibited work in the famous *Film und Foto Ausstellung* (Film and Photography Exhibition) held in Stuttgart from May 18 to July 7, 1929. Throughout the book, I refer to Heartfield's profession as *monteur*, the designation he gave himself during the

Dada period. The word in German means mechanic, and it references the verb *montieren,* which means to assemble. During the Dada movement, Heartfield was named the "Dadamonteur."

6 Heinz Rasch and Budo Rasch, *Gefesselter Blick. 25 kurze Monografien und Beiträge über neue Werbegestaltung* (Stuttgart: Zaugg, 1930), 53.

7 Oskar Maria Graf, "John Heartfield. Der Photomonteur und seine Kunst," in *Deutsche Volkszeitung* (Paris, November 20, 1938). Reprinted in *John Heartfield. Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit. Selbstzeugnisse, Erinnerungen, Interpretationen*, ed. Roland März and Gertrud Heartfield (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1981), 408.

8 Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," the second version of which was written in late December 1935–early February 1936 but remained unpublished in Benjamin's lifetime. For the English translation, published as "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version," see Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, eds., *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings,* vol. 3, *1935–1938* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 119.

9 Interview of Hans Holm by Fred Gehler, in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 247.

10 Hans Reimann, "Heartfield und der Buchumschlag," *Das Stachelschwein* 4, no. 6 (June 1927): 40.

11 Note of March 19, 1936. Reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 366.

12 For a history of turn-of-the-century documentary photography in New York, see Maren Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

13 Albert Kohn, ed., *Unsere Wohnungs-Enquête* (Berlin). Berlin notoriously had the second-worst housing conditions in Europe, outstripped only by Budapest. This yearly survey ran from 1901 through 1922. In 1914 the title changed to *Unsere Wohnungsuntersuchungen*. For a concise history of the series, see Gesine Asmus, ed., *Hinterhof, Keller und Mansarde. Einblicke in Berliner Wohnungselend 1901–1920. Die Wohnungs-Enquête der Ortskrankenkasse für den Gewerbebetrieb der Kaufleute, Handelsleute und Apotheker* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982). Despite Asmus's title, I have found surveys from 1921 and 1922.

14 Tucholsky, "Mehr Fotographien," 47.

15 The full name of this group-insurance company was Die Ortskrankenkasse für den Gewerbebetrieb der Kaufleute, Handelsleute und Apotheker.

16 Christoph Sachße and Florian Tennstedt discuss these goals in "Krankenversicherung und Wohnungsfrage. *Die Wohnungs-Enquête der Ortskrankenkasse für den Gewerbebetrieb der Kaufleute, Handelsleute und Apotheker*," in Asmus, *Hinterhof*, 271–97.

17 The number of insurance companies in 1909 was roughly 23,300. For more history, see Sachße and Tennstedt, "Krankenversicherung."

18 For more on Bismarck's campaign against the SPD, see David Blackbourn, "The Age of Modernity, 1880–1914," in *History of Germany 1780–1918: The Long Nineteenth Century* (London: Blackwell, 2003), 235–347.

19 Joseph A. Biesinger, *Germany: A Reference Guide from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Facts on File, 2006), 97.

20 Sachße and Tennstedt, "Krankenversicherung," 271–97. See also George Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

21 The positions offered by these companies were among the few civil service–like jobs available to people who were formally or informally associated with the SPD.

22 See Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life*, 1–46.

23 Kohn wrote in an extremely formal and often obtuse style. I have tried to maintain this spirit in translation while nonetheless rendering his text clear. Reprinted in Gesine Asmus, "'Mißstände . . . and das Licht des Tages zerren.' Zu den Photographien der Wohungs-Enquête," in Asmus, *Hinterhof*, 32.

24 For more on documentary photography and the argument for its carefully staged efficiency and neutrality, see Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life*, 1–46. See also Gail Buckland, *Reality Recorded: Early Documentary Photography* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1974).

25 Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October*, no. 39 (Winter 1986), 3–64. On the history of statistics and averaging and their implications for social science, see Theodore Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

26 Asmus, "Mißstände," 34. The problem of the statistically defined "typical" and the role of judgment in determining its objectivity is discussed at length in Peter Galison and Lorrain Daston, *Objectivity* (NewYork: Zone Books, 2007).

27 Asmus, "Mißstände," 32.

28 The survey also contains a small percentage of exterior photographs, which are similarly formulaic.

29 Following Kohn's model, many other local group insurance companies (*Ortskrankenkassen*) began similar photographically illustrated surveys of their own cities' housing squalor. See Sachße and Tennstedt, "Krankenversicherung," 271–97.

30 Asmus, "Mißstände," 32.

31 Ibid., 36.

32 Ibid., 35.

33 Tucholsky, "Mehr Fotographien," 47.

34 Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography," in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. and ed. Thomas Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 51. I discuss this essay at the end of chapter 6.

35 Tucholsky, "Mehr Fotographien," 47.

36 Another way to translate this word might be "partisan photography."

37 Kurt Tucholsky (signing as Ignaz Wrobel), "Tendenzfotografie," *Die Weltbühne* 17 (April 28, 1925): 637.

38 See Gustav Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp. Zur Geschichte der deutschen Revolution* (Berlin: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1920), 68.

39 The literature on this interparty antagonism is vast. The classic study is Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus. Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969). For a broader view, see Heinrich Winkler, *Der Schein der Normalität. Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik 1924 bis 1930* (Berlin: Verlag J. H. W. Dietz, 1988). Weber offers the latest word on Stalin's encouragement of the interparty conflict in Hermann Weber and Bernhard H. Bayerlein, *Der Thälmann-Skandal. Geheime Korrespondenzen mit Stalin* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2003). For an English-language account of the KPD's aggressive "front" culture against the SPD and "social fascism," see Eric Weitz, *Creating German Communism, 1890–1990* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

40 I borrow the context and terms of this anecdote, and the one that follows in the next section, from Sabine Kriebel's doctoral dissertation, which uses this episode as the launching point of her study. By carefully taking apart the story of Heartfield's response to Bloody May, Kriebel demonstrates that the artist was not just combative in his images but physically engaged in direct conflict, that his "protest was not merely performative, safely relegated to paper, scissors and glue and furtively sequestered in the inside pages of a leftist magazine, but rather, regularly occurred on the front lines." I rehearse Kriebel's sharp account in order to stress the ways in which Heartfield's pictures and actions in this year seemingly respond to Tucholsky's original 1912 call for "more photographs" with a virtual punch. See Kriebel, "Revolutionary Beauty: John Heartfield, Political Photomontage, and the Crisis of the European Left, 1929–1938" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2003), 21 and 1–55. Quote from the typescript of a 1977 discussion Gebhard had with Fred Gehler and Ullrich Kasten in preparation for the film *John Heartfield—Er sprach vom Wichtigsten.* The film seems never to have been produced. A portion of the typescript,

now in the John Heartfield Archive (Kunstsammlung, Akademie der Künste, Berlin), appears as "Max Gebhard: Der Blutmai 1929," in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 150–51.

41 Elias Canetti, *The Torch in My Ear*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1982), 270–71.

42 Adolf Behne, "Künstler des Proletariats," *Eulenspiegel* 5, no. 6 (June 1931): 95, reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 186.

43 János Reismann (pseud. Wolf Reiss), "Als ich mit John Heartfield zusammenarbeitete," *International Literatur* (Moscow) 3, no. 5 (1934): 186, 188; reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 189.

44 The description of Heartfield's self-portrait rests on Kriebel's powerful visual analysis: "Revolutionary Beauty," 21. For a concise study of this political transformation and its impact on Heartfield's photomontages, see Sabine Kriebel, "Photomontage in the Year 1932: John Heartfield and the National Socialists," *Oxford Art Journal* 31, no. 1 (March 2008): 97–127. A general study of these political events is offered by Eve Rosenhaft, *Beating the Fascists? The German Communist Party and Political Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

45 See An Paenhuysen, "Kurt Tucholsky, John Heartfield and *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*," *History of Photography* 33, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 39–54.

46 The document is in the John Heartfield Archive. The sentences noted here are reprinted in the German catalog of his 1991 retrospective. See Michael Krejsa and Petra Albrecht, "Biografische Dokumentation," in *John Heartfield*, eds. Peter Pachnicke and Klaus Honnef, exhibition catalog (Berlin: Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, 1991), 388.

47 In the following pages I provide a relatively detailed history of Heartfield's extended family and of his youth in order to situate the artist firmly within the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century context in which he matured. I also wish to underscore the myth-making operation of personal invention that has until now served opaquely as Heartfield's bibliography.

48 Hans Seeling, "Jonas Herzfeld (1793–1880) und Nachfahren in Wirtschaft, Kunst und Politik," *Neusser Jahrbuch*, no. 12 (1987), 12–23. In 1900 the business grew into the J. Herzfeld Söhne factory in Düsseldorf, owned and operated by Franz's cousins Leonhard, Gustav, and Max Herzfeld. It was that city's second-largest factory, consisting of a mechanized cotton-spinning work, a weaving mill, a fabric-printing mill, and a dye works. See page 16 of Seeling's article.

49 Ernst Kreowski, "Vorwort," in *Franz Held. Ausgewählte Werke,* ed. Kreowski (Berlin: Frowein, 1912), 9. The cover illustration for this book was designed by the young Helmut Herzfeld, then a graphic design student in Munich.

50 Ibid., 9–24.

51 Wieland Herzfelde, *John Heartfield. Leben und Werk,* 3rd ed. (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1976), 7–8. (Like his father and brother, Heartfield's younger brother Wieland changed his name, adding an *e* to the end of Herzfeld.) For more on Joseph Herzfeld, see Heinz Meiritz, "Dr. Joseph Herzfeld, 1853–1939," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Rostock* 13 (1964): 361–77. Joseph Herzfeld represented the Rostock-Doberan electoral district in Mecklenburg. In the 1920s he was a member of the Reichstag for the Communist Party of Germany.

52 His first published book was *Gorgonenhäupter: Ein realistischer Romancero* (Leipzig: Friedrich Verlag, 1887).

53 The information Herzfelde collected on his mother, much of which consists of correspondence with Czech historians, resides in his archive at Berlin's Academy of Art, as does his speculative account of his parents' meeting. See file no. 3117, Wieland Herzfelde Archive, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

54 According to my discussion with the chief of the John Heartfield Archive, Michael Krejsa, June 15, 2006.

55 For a discussion of his name change, see the final section of chapter 3.

56 See Wieland Herzfelde, "Die Hütte im Walde," in *Immergrün. Merkwürdige Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen eines fröhlichen Waisenknaben* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1981), 10–11. The suggestion that Held's flight to Switzerland may have owed more to his romantic attachment to its mountains than to a need to escape prosecution appears in Hans Winkler, *Held Saga*, vol. 9 of *Künstler. Archiv. Neue Werke zu historischen Beständen* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 2004), 14–21.

57 Herzfelde, *Immergrün*, 11.

58 This account of Alice Herzfeld is partially confirmed by letters she sent to Mayor Varnschein between 1909 and 1911 from the Berlin mental institution to which she was later moved. See file no. 2466, Wieland Herzfelde Archive. I thank Gieselle Fleischmann for fastidiously rendering Alice Herzfeld's nearly illegible (at least to this author) handwriting into a clear typescript.

59 Herzfelde, *Immergrün*, 13, translation adapted from Nancy Roth, "Heartfield's Collaboration," *Oxford Art Journal* 29, no. 3 (2006): 399.

60 According to Herzfelde's romantic memory of Varnschein's repeated recounting, the scene they found was one of childhood innocence, save the tormented Helmut. "The youngest lay peacefully in a soaking wet cradle, sucking on a thumb stuck deep in her mouth. Our other sister stirred flour and water in a kettle, declaring that she was making 'omelets.' As the newcomers began to ask about our parents, my brother began to sob convulsively, as I, taking no notice of anyone, continued to alter the borders of the puddle that had formed around the baby's cradle with my index finger." Herzfelde, *Immergrün*, 14, translation adapted from Roth, "Heartfield's Collaboration," 399–40. Nancy Roth emphasizes the degree to which Herzfelde had long positioned his brother as the more nonrational, impulsive, rebellious, and emotional of the two, while representing himself as cheerful, rational, and immune to adversity. Roth sees these representations as critical components of their lifelong collaboration, a performance of identity that the two brothers initiated from their youth. I agree with Roth that the brothers built personas to inhabit as an artist and writer duo. But her description of these roles as nearly pure performance partly underplays the seriousness with which the two men inhabited them. Moreover, the adoption of earnestly performed identities was expected among the prewar and interwar avant-gardes. I discuss this point in chapter 3.

61 Herzfelde, *Immergrün*, 21.

62 For this account, see "Himmel und Hölle," in Herzfelde, *Immergrün*, 18–28.

63 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 8.

64 File no. 2466, Wieland Herzfelde Archive.

65 Sergei Tret'iakov, "Johnny," in *People of a Funeral Pire* (Moscow: IZOGIZ, 1936); translated into German by Fritz Mierau in *Gesichter der Avantgarde. Porträts-Essays-Briefe* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1985), 139.

66 From Tret'iakov, "Johnny," trans. Mierau, 139.

67 Author's interview with Milein Cosman, London, July 27, 2008. I warmly thank Ms. Cosman for her beautiful and occasionally tearful recollection of her friendship with Heartfield.

68 Canetti, *Torch*, 270.

69 Heartfield, in a 1966 radio interview, and Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 11.

70 Herzfelde recalls some of these pastimes in diaries penned in his later teens. This diary book was saved by one of his friends through the Nazi period and the war. A typed version lies in the John Heartfield Archive.

71 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 9; Stefan Heym, "Der tolle-Heartfield," *Wochenpost* 8 (June 17, 1961): 16. Sherwin Simmons offers important insight into Heartfield's early enthusiasm about, and training in, advertising. See his "Advertising Seizes Control of Life: Berlin Dada and the Power of Advertising," *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 1 (1999): 126–27.

72 Heartfield, in a 1966 radio interview, this portion of which is reprinted in Krejsa and Albrecht, "Biografische Dokumentation," 390.

73 The applied arts experienced a boom in Germany around the turn of the century as the country labored to improve the quality of its industrial product design. Graphic design played an important role in this larger project. For a superb English-language study of this history, see Frederic Schwarz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

74 Heartfield's teachers included, according to Herzfelde, Maximilian Dasio, Julius Dietz, and Robert Engels. Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 9. Heartfield also mentions the Bavarian school in his 1951 vita. See Krejsa and Albrecht, "Biografische Dokumentation,"390.

75 See Kreowski, *Held*, 9.

76 Heartfied, vita, 1951. See Krejsa and Albrecht, "Biografische Dokumentation,"390.

77 See Simmons, "Advertising," 126–27.

78 Period accounts of Neumann's pedagogy can be found in Paul Westheim, "Ernst Neumann, ein Reklamekünstler und Pädagoge," *Mitteilung des Vereins Deutscher Reklamefachleute,* no. 12a (1910): 9–14; and Julius Klinger, "Ernst Neumann," *Mitteilungen des Vereins Deutscher Reklamefachleute*, no. 29 (1912): 3–4. Simmons cites these sources in his thoroughly researched "Advertising" article.

79 Simmons, "Advertising," 127.

80 Paul Rubin, ed., *Die Reklame. Ihre Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Berlin: Paetel, 1914).

CHAPTER TWO

1 Wieland Herzfelde, *John Heartfield. Leben und Werk,* 3rd ed. (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1976), 18. I base my translation on Brigid Doherty's translated passages in her unpublished dissertation, "Berlin Dada: Montage and the Embodiment of Modernity, 1916–1920" (University of California, Berkeley, 1996), 5–6. My book places itself in dialogue with Doherty's scholarship on Dada photomontage and follows on the heels of her two journal articles discussing specific discursive moments of Dada montage: "'We Are All Neurasthenics!' or, The Trauma of Dada Montage," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 82–132, and "Figures of Pseudorevolution," *October*, no. 84 (Spring 1998), 65–90. My study is also heavily indebted to Matthew Biro's discussion of Berlin Dada and the cyborg, particularly his chapter "Soldier Portraits, War Cripples, and the Deconstruction of the Authoritarian Subject." Here, as elsewhere in my book, I lean heavily on what Biro describes as Berlin Dada's positive project "devoted to artistic self-fashioning and the imagining of new forms of hybrid modern identity in different media." This, he explains, runs parallel to Dada's attack on bourgeois modern art and its other perceived opponents through satire and other modes of critique. As the next chapter will show, such positive self-fashioning constituted the point of origin for the lifelong performance known as John Heartfield. See Biro, *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 153–98 (quote from page 153).

2 As Herzfelde explained, "[Grosz] had specialized in sending care-packages to annoy soldiers at the front. As far as he was concerned, they weren't annoyed enough." Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 18, translated in Doherty, "Berlin Dada," 5. For an analysis of Grosz's opposition to the war and his postwar radicalization, see Barbara McCloskey, *George Grosz and the Communist Party: Art and Radicalism in Crisis, 1918–1936* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

3 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 19, translation modified from Doherty, "Berlin Dada," 5–6.

4 For an English-language source on the Turnip Winter, see Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 142–151.

5 See Chickering, *Imperial Germany*, 47–48. Doherty suggests that these songbooks were intended specifically for the troops so that they could sing together and thereby maintain patriotic and military comrade-

ship. See Doherty, "Berlin Dada," 7.

6 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 19, translation modified from Doherty, "Berlin Dada," 5.

7 Here, Herzfelde is recounting Heartfield's recollection that soldiers, not just the artist duo, were creating montaged correspondence in order to sneak illicit messages past the military censors. Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 19, translation from Doherty, "Berlin Dada," 6.

8 John Heartfield, quoted in "Rundfunkgespräch (DDR) mit Renate Stoelpe und John Heartfield. 2. Teil: Erfindung der Fotomontage" (part 2 of a two-part radio interview, broadcast on September 12, 1966), typed transcript with handwritten corrections, John Heartfeld Archive, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 6–7. Translation adapted from Doherty, "Berlin Dada," 1.

9 George Grosz later recounted his and Heartfield's joint "discovery" of photomontage, facetiously supplying an exact time and place for the event. He thereby withdrew from the debates that swirled around the issue, refusing to engage Raoul Hausmann, for example, who vigorously asserted that he and his then mistress, the lifelong photomontage artist Hannah Höch, had devised the technique first. For Grosz's semisatirical account of his and Heartfield's discovery, see his "Randzeichnungen zum Thema," in *Schulter an Schulter. Die Abendteuer des braven Soldaten Schwejk*, a uniquely titled issue of *Blätter der Piscator-Bühne*, January 1928, 9–10. These pages are also illustrated as fig. 4.8. For a reprint of the various statements made in this debate, see "Die Streit um die Erfindung der Fotomontage," in *John Heartfield. Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit. Selbstzeugnisse, Erinnerungen, Interpretationen,* ed. Roland März and Gertrud Heartfield (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1981), 29–31. Heartfield suffered a severe cerebral concussion in 1927 after being thrown by National Socialist brownshirts from the upper level of a double-decker bus. This injury apparently altered his speech for life. I thank Michael Krejsa of Berlin's Akademie der Künste for suggesting this relationship between Heartfield's speech and his violent past.

10 John Heartfield, "Photomontage—A Means of Class Struggle," talk delivered at the Polygraphic Institute, Moscow, 1931. Excerpted in Sergei Tret'iakov, *John Heartfield: A Monograph* (Moscow: ISOGIZ [Moscow State Publishing House], 1936), translated into German and partially reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 297–98. Adapted from Devin Fore's translation from Russian to English.

11 Such statements also suggest that photomontage arose not through the trained talents of artists but through everyday acts of resistance by average people—in this case, discontented soldiers.

12 For a recent discussion of Wilhelmine-era advertising and Germany's increasingly modern visual culture, see Kevin Repp, "Marketing, Modernity, and 'the German People's Soul': Advertising and Its Enemies in Late Imperial Germany, 1896–1914," in *Selling Modernity: Advertising in Twentieth-Century Germany,* ed. Pamela Swett, S. Jonathan Wiesen, and Jonathan Zatlin, 27–51 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007). For a sharp discussion of the relationship between advertising and avant-garde art after the war, see Heidrun Schröder-Kehler, "Künstler erobern die Warnewelt. Neue Typographie in der Werbegestaltung," in *Wechsel Wirkungen. Ungarische Avantgarde in der Weimarer Republik,* ed. Hubertus Gaßner, 388–411 (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 1986).

13 Eckhard Siepmann, *Montage: John Heartfield vom Club Dada zur* Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung (Berlin: Elefanten Press Verlag, 1977), 16.

14 Rosalind Krauss, "Photography in the Service of Surrealism," in *Photography and Surrealism*, ed. Jane Livingston (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985), 25.

15 Herbert Leclerc, "Ansichten über Ansichtskarten," *Archiv für deutsche Postgeschichte* 34, no. 2 (1986): 17–18. Leclerc's important article occupies almost the entire issue, pages 3 to 65.

16 On the earlier *carte de visite,* see Jean Sagne, "All Kinds of Portraits: The Photog-

rapher's Studio," and on the subsequent inventions listed here, see Pierre Albert and Gilles Feyel, "Photography and the Media: Changes in the Illustrated Press," both in *A New History of Photography,* ed. Michel Frizot, 103–22, 359–69 (Cologne: Könnemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998).

17 Leclerc, "Ansichten," 31. Germany saw 736 million postcards exchanged between 1900 and 1901, and over 1.5 billion between 1903 and 1904; a hefty percentage of these postcards likely bore pictures. For more on Germany's status as a manufacturer of postcards, see Wolfgang Till, *Alte Postkarten* (Munich: Verlagsgruppe Weltbild, 1994), 24–31; and John Fraser, "Propaganda on the Picture Postcard," *Oxford Art Journal* 3, no. 2 (October 1980): 39–40.

18 For more on the relation between postcards and inventive photography, see Clément Chéroux, "The Small Change of Art," in *The Stamp of Fantasy: The Visual Inventiveness of Photographic Postcards*, ed. Clément Chéroux and Ute Eskildsen (Winterthur: Fotomuseum Winterthur and Göttingen: Steidl, 2007), 195–204.

19 Grosz's collection shows that he was particularly fascinated by the pornographic images that flourished on turn-of-the-century postcards. See Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius, "Erotik im Blick des George Grosz," in *George Grosz. Berlin, New York,* exhibition catalog, ed. Peter-Klaus Schuster, 182–89 (Berlin: Nationalgalerie Berlin, 1994).The George Grosz Archive is housed at the Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin, and at Harvard University's Houghton Library. The postcards he collected in the prewar and wartime era mostly reside in Berlin.

20 As I noted in the previous chapter, this advertising program was housed at Berlin's Charlottenburg Arts and Crafts School and was headed by Ernst Neumann.

21 On the contribution of Odol to modern advertising and its use of picture postcards, see Henriette Väth-Hinz, *Odol: Reklame-Kunst um 1900* (Gießen: Anabas Verlag, 1985). See also the section on Odol in Michael Weisser, *Deutsche Reklame: 100 Jahre Werbung 1870–1970* (Bassum: Doell Verlag, 2002), 165–76.

22 Sigrid Metken, "'Ich hab' diese Karte im Schützengraben geschrieben . . .' Bilpostkarten im Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Bilder des Ersten Weltkrieges,* ed. Rainer Rother (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1994), 138. Bernd Ulrich gives the same figures in "Feldpostbriefe im Ersten Weltkrieg–Bedeutung und Zensur," in *Kriegsalltag. Die Rekonstruktion des Kriegsalltags als Aufgabe der historischen Forschung und der Friedenserziehung,* ed. Peter Knoch (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1989), 43. These figures, which were published in the aftermath of the war, come from a study commissioned by the German *Reichpostministeriums* (Postal Ministry). See Karl Schracke, *Geschichte der deutschen Feldpost im Kriege 1914/18* (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1921), 36.

23 Many of the men went without a day's leave for eighteen months to two years. Schracke, *Geschichte der deutschen Feldpost*, 3, quoted from Ulrich, "Feldpostbriefe," 49.

24 The diary was published in the Weimar era as Valentine Strohschnitter, *Der deutsche Soldat 1913–1919* (Frankfurt am Main: Henzel and Doland, 1930), 75. Quoted from Ulrich, "Feldpostbriefe," 48.

25 Schracke, *Geschichte der deutschen Feldpost*, 3, quoted from Ulrich, "Feldpostbriefe," 49.

26 Metken, "'Ich hab' diese Karte,'" 138.

27 For an English-language source on German censorship and propaganda during World War I, see David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War 1914–1918* (London: Athalone Press, 2000). On censorship of mail to and from the front, see Ulrich, "Feldpostbriefe," 49–60. For an analysis of photomontage norms and a general introduction to the history of wartime picture postcards in Germany, see Deutsches Historische Museum, ed., *Der Erste Welkrieg in deutschen Bildpostkarten* (Berlin: Digitale Bibliothek–Directmedia, 2002). This is volume 66 of the German Historical Museum's CD-ROM project, which aims to digitize the institution's large holdings. The compre-

hensive introduction and the individual commentaries are written by the postal historian Kartrin Kilian, whose discussion of postcard montage appears under the heading "Zeichen und Schriftzeichen."

28 Welch, *Germany, Propaganda*, 128–30; see 178–83 for a discussion of censorship restrictions, and specifically what could and could not be reproduced.

29 Apparently, many of the imperial personality postcards that appeared up to the year 1914 were produced by E. Bieber, "der Kaiserliche Hoffotograf" (imperial house photographer). See Marlies Ebert, "Bildpostkarten als Mittel der ideologischen Massenbeeinflussung. Gendanken zur Kartensammlung des Märkischen Museums," *Jahrbuch des Märkischen Museums* 10 (1984): 43, and Metken, "'Ich hab' diese Karte,'" 42.

30 For an extraordinary discussion of similar images, see Elizabeth Otto, "Uniform: On Constructions of Soldierly Masculinity in Early Twentieth-Century Visual Culture," in *Kunst, Geschlecht, Politik. Geschlechterentwürfe in der Kunst des Kaiserreichs und der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Martina Kessel (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2005), 22–25. See the equally fascinating analyses in Doherty, "Berlin Dada," 21–27, and Hanne Bergius, *Montage und Metamechanik: Dada Berlin, Artistik von Polaritäten* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 2000), 43, 260. On the subject of these portraits more generally, see Robert Bosshard, Ute Eskildsen, and Robert Knodt, eds., *Erinnerung an die Dienstzeit. Fotografien der Jahrhundertwende* (Essen: Museum Folkwang, 1993); and Budo von Dewitz, "Visuelle Anarchien," in *Marinus–Heartfield. Politische Fotomontagen der 1930er Jahre,* ed. Gunner Byskov and Budo von Dewitz (Cologne: Museum Ludwig, 2008), 9–20.

31 März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 464.

32 März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt,* 464. It remains unclear whether Heartfield actually created this composition during the war. It first appeared in *Die freie Welt* (2, no. 29 [1920]: 5), a publication of the German Independent Social Democratic Party to which Grosz frequently contributed. This might indicate its origins in Grosz and Heartfield's orbit. But Heartfield's reflections on this composition largely came after World War II, when he needed to distance himself from Berlin Dada, which postwar Stalinism still considered to be "formalism" and "bourgeois decadence." For photomontage to have been born during World War I would, at that time, have been a more acceptable alternative to its being incubated in Berlin Dada. My study suggests that, regardless of the coercive East German context, this story of the origin of avant-garde photomontage, at least in Heartfield's and Grosz's case, is historically acurate.

33 Welch, *Germany, Propaganda*, 128–83; Budo von Dewitz, "Zur Geschichte der Kriegsphotographie des Ersten Weltkrieges," in Rother, *Die letzten Tage*, 163–76. On press censorship, see also Wilhelm Deist, "Zensur und Propaganda in Deutschland während des Ersten Weltkrieges," in *Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft. Studien zur preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichte* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1991), 153–63. The most comprehensive tome on this subject is Kurt Kosyzk, *Deutsche Pressepolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1968).

34 The government and military kept the consequences for such transgressions vague so as to intimidate press and postcard outlets with what was essentially an arbitrary power. The country's private media, however, demanded clear guidelines and finally forced the government to publish a censorship code in 1917. The resulting pamphlet makes for fascinating, if obtuse, reading. Oberzensurstelle des Kriegspresseamts, ed., *Zensurbuch für die deutsche Presse* (Berlin: Kriegspresseamt, 1917).

35 Klaus Latzel, *Vom Sterben im Krieg: Wandlungen in den Einstellungen zum Soldatentod zwischen dem Siebenjährigen Krieg und dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Warendorf: Fahlsbusch, 1988), exerpted from Gerd-Walter Fritsche, "Bedingungen des individuellen Kriegserlebnisses," in Knoch, *Kriegsalltag*, 116.

36 From Peter Knoch, ed., *Menschen im Krieg 1914–1918. Bilder und Lesebuch zur Austel-*

lung in Ludwigsburg (Dezember 1987–Februar 1988) (Ludwigsburg: Hochschulschriften der Pädigogischen Ludwigsburg, 1987), 5.

37 Letter from Stefan Schimmer, December 6, 1914, reprinted in Fritsche, "Bedingungen des individuellen Kriegserlebnisses," 132; my emphasis.

38 Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (New York: Buccaneer Books, 1983), 113.

39 Heartfield wrote the date of 1916 on the back of this photo juxtaposition, although he likely did not begin producing the balance of these works until 1917. Based on an August 2002 conversation with Michael Krejsa, head of the John Heartfield Archive in Berlin.

CHAPTER THREE

1 Wieland Herzfelde, *John Heartfield. Leben und Werk,* 3rd ed. (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1976), 16.

2 Herzfelde noted Heartfield's October arrival in Berlin in his diary on December 3, 1913. He had sent his letter to Lasker-Schüler by November 11, 1913. See the entry of this date in the typescript of his diary, now in the John Heartfield Archive, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. In a short and dramatic introduction to published excerpts from this diary, Herzfelde notes that a female friend saved the diary from his abandoned house in Wansee in 1933; it survived the Nazi period and World War II hidden in the wall of her apartment. She returned the youthful diary to Herzfelde when he made his way back to Germany in 1949. See Herzfelde, "Choroscho," in *Immergrün. Merkwürdige Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen eines fröhlichen Waisenknaben* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1981), 90–93. As for Heartfield's service, the photomonteur later reported that he had been inducted into the Kaiser Franz Josef Regiment and was housed in the regiment's barracks in Neuköln. See excerpts from his 1966 radio interview in Michael Krejsa and Petra Albrecht, "Biografische Dokumentation," in *John Heartfield*, exhibition catalog, ed. Peter Pachnicke and Klaus Honnef (Berlin: Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, 1991), 391.

3 On these periodicals and their milieu, see Eva Kolinsky, *Engagierter Expressionismus. Politik und Literatur zwischen Weltkrieg und Weimarer Republik. Eine Analyse expressionistischer Zeitschriften* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1970). For an English-language source, see Maryelizabeth O'Brien, "*Der Sturm* and *Die Aktion*: A Politics of Culture," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 33, no. 1 (February 1977): 22–35.

4 Their other inspiration at this time was futurism, which I discuss later in the chapter. On Lasker-Schüler's writing, see Calvin Jones, *The Literary Reputation of Else Lasker-Schüler: Criticism 1901–1933* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1994).

5 Herzfelde copied this and other letters to Lasker-Schüler into his diary. For this first letter, see his diary entry of December 3, 1913. He mentions the length of the letter in an earlier entry, November 30, 1913.

6 Herzfelde diary, December 3, 1913. Herzfelde purposefully misspelled Heartfield's first name as Hellmuth, perhaps wishing to make it appear more noble or poetic.

7 Herzfelde notes receipt of Lasker-Schüler's letter in his diary entry of December 3, 1913.

8 Herzfelde diary, December 7, 1913.

9 For a sharp analysis of Herzfelde's positioning of himself and his brother, see Nancy Roth, "Heartfield's Collaboration," *Oxford Art Journal* 29, no. 3 (2006): 395–418.

10 Herzfelde diary, December 19, 1913.

11 Wieland Herzfeld [*sic*], "Die Ethik des Geisteskranken," *Die Aktion* 4 (April 4, 1914): 298–301. (Herzfelde added the *e* to his name around the same time, as I discuss below.) Reprinted in Thomas Anz and Michael Stark, eds., *Expressionismus: Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur 1910–1920* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1982), 183–86, excerpt from 183.

12 Ibid., 184.

13 Ibid., 184, 185.

14 Herzfelde may not have known that syphilis was the cause of Nietzsche's mental col-

lapse. In his first letter to Lasker-Schüler, Wieland linked his knowledge of insanity more directly to his parents' fatal mental illnesses. After mentioning the draft of his *Die Aktion* article, he notes, "As it is, my father and mother were mentally ill for over ten years" (Herzfelde diary, December 3, 1913). In his diary entry on January 1, 1914, Herzfelde notes that he had submitted the the article to *Die Aktion* in mid-December; a cover letter to its editor, Franz Pfemfert, is dated December 12, 1913. This document is discussed in the notes following the reprinted article in Herzfeld, "Die Ethik," 186. This submission was likely the first draft of the article, completed after Lasker-Schüler responded so positively to the ideas he expressed in his first letter. Herzfelde completed Pfemfert's suggested changes by January 26, 1914. For more on the avant-garde's reading of Nietzsche, see Steven Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). For delicious examples of artists' writings on the philosopher, see Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, eds., *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, trans. Klaus Lankheit (New York: Viking Press, 1974).

15 The gallery Der Sturm first exhibited futurist paintings along with expressionist art in a show entitled *Die Futuristen. Umberto Boccioni, Carlo D. Carrá, Luigi Russolo, Gino Severini*, which ran from April 4 to the beginning of May, 1912. An exhibition of Gino Severini followed in June–August 1913, as did numerous articles on futurism in the magazine. See Barbara Alms and Wiebke Steinmetz, eds., *Der Sturm im Berlin der zehner Jahre* (Delmenhorst: Städtische Galerie Delmenhorst, 2000).

16 This admixture also began to characterize the work of expressionist painter Ludwig Meidner, and at almost exactly the same time. Meidner's apocalyptic paintings of urban chaos from the month preceding World War I could even be understood as a visual analogue to Herzfelde's published musings. The two men naturally became friends when the younger moved to Berlin in 1914. For more on Meidner's praise for urban tumult, see the painter's "Anleitung zum Malen von Großstadtbildern," *Kunst und Künstler* 12, no. 5 (1914): 312–14.

17 Herzfelde diary, December 7, 1913.

18 Heartfield as public persona was always a collaborative project. In the decades to come, Herzfelde saw himself taking charge of intellectual labor while his older brother used a studiously, and hence paradoxically, cultivated naiveté to produce powerful images. Whether the older brother's naive emotional acuity truly dominated over his cerebral intelligence is debatable. One of my goals in this book is to demonstrate that Heartfield combined his famed passion with pictorial cunning and skill that reflected strong intellectual capacities. His reliance on collaborations, however, meant that he did not assert this rigor publicly if the formula for such teamwork followed the one established by Wieland. The case of Sergei Tret'iakov, however, is distinct. In this relationship, the avant-garde Russian polymath encouraged Heartfield to generate remarkably sophisticated theorizations of his montage practice.

19 The court surrounding Lasker-Schüler at the Café des Westens reads like a roll call of the Weimar era's future literary and artistic corps: the expressionist poet Theodore Däubler; the recently detoxed heroine addict, poet, and future Communist Party hack Johannes R. Becher; the future Dada writer Salomo Friedländer; the prominent expressionist painter Ludwig Meidner; the future *Neue Sachlichkeit* painter Heinrich Davringhausen; later Grosz; and of course the two Herzfeld brothers; among others.

20 For more on her transgender identities, see Maryelizabeth O'Brien, "'Ich war verkleidet als Poet . . . ich bin Poetin!!' The Masquerade of Gender in Else Lasker-Schüler's Work," *German Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (Winter, 1992): 1–17. Herzfelde mused about this facet of her multiple personas later in his life. See Herzfelde, "Else Lasker-Schüler. Begegnungen mit der Dichterin und ihrem Werk," in *Zur Sache. Geschrieben und gesprochen zwischen 18 und 80* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1976), 401–3.

21 Writing as "Abigail the First of Thebes," and addressing her letters to her half brother Prince Ruben, the persona she had invented for Marc, Lasker-Schüler suggested inviting an international list of poets to her upcoming coronation festivity in ancient Egypt. Among the invitees would be "my youngest playmate Wieland Herzfelde from Wiesbaden. What do you say to this suggestion?" Of course, the question was addressed both to Marc and to Wieland; for the latter, the query had to do with this newly altered form of his name. Soon thereafter, Wieland began using his alternative appellation consistently. Lasker-Schüler, "Briefe an Prinz Ruben," in *Die Aktion,* no. 4 (January 24, 1914), 85.

22 See Matthew Biro, *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 10–15.

23 Nancy Roth focuses on this proposition of Heartfield as a unique and lifelong performance in "Heartfield's Collaboration." I see Heartfield's creation of his artistic identity as typical for its time within Berlin's bohemia. The name change that Roth cites as the onset of this performance actually occurred near mid-August of 1917, well after Helmut had established his artistic identity and begun performing acts of resistance, such as the subversive sending of photomontaged postcards.

24 See David Welch*, Germany, Propaganda and Total War 1914–1918* (London: Athalone Press, 2000).

25 Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

26 In his diary, Wieland Herzfelde notes his brother's induction into the armed forced on September 15, 1914.

27 Wieland Herzfelde, "The Curious Merchant from Holland," *Harper's*, November 1943, 569.

28 Wieland seems to have been more resigned to his eventual service and even considered volunteering. Young Helmut exhausted a great deal of effort trying to keep him from doing so. As Herzfelde noted in his diary at the time, "Hellmuth [*sic*] is strongly opposed. [After introducing the idea of volunteering] I and Hellmuth walk about and visit the café until 3:00 in the morning. He wants to dissuade me of my decision. I have more important things to accomplish than have myself shot dead. There is no war for which my intelligence has value." Herzfelde diary, September 15, 1914. With a certain degree of cunning, Helmut tried to convince Wieland that his own self-fashioned identity as a precocious intellectual could never align with the brute phenomenon of German militarism and nationalist war.

29 Among other things, Lasker-Schüler declared that war was a negative form of madness. Mass hysteria, she complained, had resulted. She worried that the conflict was consuming German citizens and enemy soldiers with equal voracity, and she thus worked to keep her friends tethered to their café table and far from the front. See her correspondence in Else Lasker-Schüler, *Werke und Briefe: Kritische Ausgabe*, vol. 7, *Briefe, 1914–1924,* ed. Karl Jürgen Skrodzki (Frankfurt: Jüdischer Verlag, 1996–2005). For Wieland's thoughts about her reaction to the war, see his diary entry of September 9, 1914.

30 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 15. Trakl actually committed suicide in a hospital after having been injured in combat.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 16. A fight in the Café des Westens with writer Kurt Hiller had led Lasker-Schüler to decamp her group to the Romanisches Café. See Herzfelde, "Else Lasker-Schüler," 404–5.

33 Ibid. Significantly, Herzfelde never answered his own query as to the effects of the group's therapy. To do so would partly foreclose Heartfield's self-conscious role in creating and performing his public persona. Yet madness remains implicit in Herzfelde's assessment of Heartfield's "productive rage." Added to all this was the history of their parents' mental illness.

34 As noted above, Herzfelde related this

anecdote in the days of cold-war East Germany, so the story may be either selective or invented. Yet it fits with Heartfield's behavior patterns and with other period documents such as Lasker-Schüler's letters and Wieland's early diary.

35 Both Herzfelde and George Grosz also claimed to have attacked their commanding officers in fits of rage and madness during the war. See Herzfelde's account in "Das Weiße Immergrün," *Immergrün*, 185–196. For Grosz's report, see *George Grosz: An Autobiography*, trans. Nora Hodges (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 108.

36 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 16. Documentation at the Political Archive of the Foreign Service confirms Heartfield's employment in the postal service, as discussed in the next chapter. Grosz also notes Heartfield's position as a letter carrier in, for instance, a letter to Otto Schmalhausen, May 30, 1917, in Grosz, *George Grosz Briefe 1913–1959*, ed. Herbert Knust (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1979), 54.

37 From his 1966 radio interview in Krejsa and Albrecht, "Biografische Dokumentation," 391.

38 See Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield, Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen, oder, Die Macht der Freundschaft," *Sinn und Form* 6 (1971); reprinted in *Zur Sache*, 438–39.

39 Herzfelde, "Curious Merchant," 570.

40 Ibid. Here I diverge from the *Harper's* translation by exchanging the word *appearance* for *look*. The German version, "*Ein Kaufmann aus Holland*" appears in Herzfelde, *Immergrün*, 166–84.

41 Herzfelde, "Curious Merchant," 570. Herzfelde later noted, "We loved Grosz's appearance and his nature, his original style of storytelling and listening." See Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield," 438.

42 Herzfelde, "Curious Merchant," 570.

43 Herzfelde, "Curious Merchant," 572. Brigid Doherty uses this anecdote as an important component of her discussion of Berlin Dada's photomontage and its transcription of trauma. She subtly suggests an equation between the body of the war cripple, shockingly dismantled by shrapnel, the kitsch Grosz proposed producing from these grenade fragments, and the montaged image constituted from commercial detritus. See Doherty, "Berlin Dada: Montage and the Embodiment of Modernity, 1916–1920" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1996), esp. 1–72. Though deeply indebted to her work, I make a somewhat different reading of trauma and assembled war kitsch in this chapter and again in chapter 5.

44 Herzfelde, "Curious Merchant," 571–72.

45 George Grosz, "Abwicklung," in *George Grosz. Eintrittsbillett zu meinem Gehirnzirkus. Erinnerungen, Schriften, Briefe* (Leipzig: Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, 1988), 85.

46 See Grosz, *Briefe*, 26, 33, 35. It is possible that his change of name to Grosz arose from his charade as a Dutch merchant. The spelling "sz" could have been an allusion to the *-szoon* (son) of Dutch names, which is often so abbreviated. Gijsbertsz., for example, is a last name meaning "son of Gijsbert." I thank Joel Score for suggesting this possibility.

47 The couple added, "He was extremely gifted in his ability to portray another person, another mentality." See Beth Irwin Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 5.

48 Grosz had, in fact, published at least one of his drawings in the humor magazine *Ulk* while still a student. See Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz: The Berlin Years* (Venice: Peggy Guggenheim Collection, 1997), 8. He also won critical acclaim not long after meeting Herzfelde, and this would be in a journal independent of the one soon founded by Heartfield and Herzfelde. See Theodor Däubler, "George Grosz," *Die weissen Blätter* 3, no. 4 (1916): 167–70. Däubler also belonged to the circle around Else Lasker-Schüler.

49 Herzfelde, "Curious Merchant," 575.

50 Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield," 438.

51 Grosz, *Autobiography*, 99.
52 Grosz, "Abwicklung," 83.
53 For a perceptive discussion of this and other early drawings by Grosz, see Barbara McCloskey, *George Grosz and the Communist Party: Art and Radicalism in Crisis, 1918–1936* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 21–47.
54 Grosz, "Abwicklung," 82.
55 Grosz, *Autobiography*, 98–99.
56 Grosz, "Abwicklung," 82.
57 Ibid., 83.
58 From Mynona (Salomo Friedländer), *George Grosz* (Dresden: Kaemmerer, 1922), 7.
59 Wieland Herzfelde, "George Grosz," in *George Grosz: 30 Drawings and Watercolors* (New York: E. S. Hermann, 1944), n.p.
60 Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield," 439.
61 Ibid., 438–39.
62 She continued by asking, "Do you find this favorable for George, Oz [Otto]? I'm very unhappy about it." Eva Peter, letter to Otto Schmalhausen dated "second day of Pentacost [May 20], 1918," file 973, folder 1, George Grosz Archive, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
63 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 17.
64 Ibid., 16.
65 Ibid., 16–17.
66 The previous and last issue of *Die neue Jugend*, edited by Heinz Barger and Friedrich Holländer, had been published in August 1914. The first issue of its new incarnation was number 7. See Herzfelde, "Aus der Jugendzeit des Malik-Verlages," in *Neue Jugend,* ed. Herzfelde (Hilversum: Boekenvriend, 1967), 5–18; and Herzfelde, *Zur Sache*, 334–50. Herzfelde was thereafter effectively the journal's editor, though credit for this role shifted. The collective administrators sometimes used pseudonyms if they thought the censors were intensifying their watchfulness. Herzfelde later explained why he was the first holder of this title: "The authorities—we thought—could hardly do anything to me, as I was still a minor." Heartfield, he reported, did the layout. When Herzfelde was called to the front in late 1916, Heartfield, Grosz, and writer Franz Jung collectively took over the editorship. For further details about this project and its directors' attempts to bypass the censors, see Wieland Herzfelde, "Wieland Herzfeld über den Malik-Verlag," in *Der Malik-Verlag 1916–1947,* catalog for exhibition held at the Deutsche Akademie der Künste zu Berlin (Leipzig: Oswald Schmidt K. G. Leipzig, 1967), 5–70. Generally, Heartfield and his brother worked in close collaboration, so one cannot easily distinguish which of the two was responsible for any given contribution to *Die neue Jugend* or to any of their other projects in the decades to come. See Nancy Roth's article "Heartfield's Collaboration" and her PhD dissertation, "The Politics of Collaboration: Brothers, Friends, the Party and the Performance of John Heartfield, 1915–1938" (City University of New York, 1996).
67 To avoid rousing the censors, the directors of *Die neue Jugend* tried to understate or disguise its opposition to the war. Richard Cork, however, has characterized *Die neue Jugend* as a radical periodical. Cork, *A Bitter Truth: Avant-Garde Art and the Great War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994). I gently suggest otherwise, given that an openly radical publication would scarcely have survived under the Wilhelminine regime's strict censorship even before the war. Although the first page of the newly issued journal featured the poem "To Peace," the poem made no direct reference to the war, choosing an evasive path similar to that already forged by *Die Aktion*.
68 This characterization appeared in the 1920 catalog of the First International Dada Fair under item numbers 10, 11, and 12. The phrase was applied specifically to the introductory pamphlet that accompanied Grosz's 1917 *Small Grosz Portfolio*. The inventive typography that Heartfield devised for this publication would reappear in a far more animated form in *Die neue Jugend*'s two weekly issues of that same year, to be discussed below.
69 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 18.
70 Excerpted from the longer quote reprinted

by Herzfelde. *Neue Jugend* 1, no. 7 (June 1916): 143.

71 Oberzensurtelle des Kriegspresseamts, ed., "Ausländische Artikel," *Zensurbuch für die deutsche Presse* (Berlin: Kriegspresseamts, 1917), n.p. The imperial government and its armed forces, as this stipulation demonstrates, were keenly aware of the need to frame foreign news articles or quotations with brackets that would transform the hostility of enemy nations into foolishness or harmless chatter. See also Welch, *Germany, Propaganda*,128–30; discussion of government censorship restrictions, specifically what could and could not be reproduced, also appears on pages 178 and 183.

72 *Neue Jugend* 1, no. 8 (August 1916): 165. The exhibition took place at the behest of Berlin's Red Cross offices, apparently to raise money for the German colonies.

73 Franz Pfemfert, "Ich schneide die Zeit aus," *Die Aktion* 30, nos. 16/17 (April 17, 1915), 214.

74 From Karl Kraus, "Notizen zu einem Lichtbildervortrag im Grossen Beethovensaal in Wien am 27. März, 1914," *Die Fackel* 16, no. 400 (1914): 46. I have taken this quotation from Hanne Bergius's brilliant discussion of the use of "citational montages" to mount "subliminal critiques of the war." See Bergius, *Montage und Metamechanik*, 91. This approach culminated in Kraus's play *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (1922).

75 Noted by Herzfelde, *Der Malik-Verlag*, 14.

76 Grosz, *Autobiography*, 133–34.

77 Richard Huelsenbeck, *Mit Witz, Licht und Grütze. Auf den Spuren des Dadaismus* (Wiesbaden: Limes-Verlag, 1957), taken from März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 64.

78 In April 1917, not long after Grosz made his final return to Berlin from the war, Wieland managed to wrest a leave from his military service in Flanders. Herzfelde later recalled observing that "in my absence Franz Jung exerted an influence on Grosz and most especially on John that was vigorously confrontational. I deemed it proper" (Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield," 443). In fact, according to Cläre Jung, who at the time was having an affair with and would later marry Franz, Wieland had heard of this rising influence and was deeply alarmed. Not only was Herzfelde jealous of the way "Johnny was fully attached to Franz," but he worried about his sibling's health. According to Cläre's recollection, "A friend had written him at the [battle-]field that he should return home immediately because Johnny had become addicted to cocaine and drink." See Cläre Jung, "Tonbandprotokoll: Gespräch zwischen. G. Heartfield und Cläre Junge. November 8, 1975," in the John Heartfield Archive, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

79 Letter from Jung to Grosz, May 14, 1917, file no. 70, George Grosz Archive, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. "Sehr geehrter Herr Grosz! Anlässlich der heute erfolgten Eintragung unseres Verlages in das Handelsregister, das nunmehr firmieren wird: 'Der Malik-Verlag Hellmut Herzfeld,' und wobei die Prokura unserem Herrn Jung übertragen worden ist, gestatten wir uns, Ihnen beifolgend M 100.—überweisen zu lassen. Wir geben uns gern der Hoffnung hin, dass unswere weitere Geschäftsverbindung eine für beide Teile angenehme und erfreuliche sein möge und begrüssen Sie somit. In vorzüglicher Hochachtung, 'Der Malik-Verlag Hellmut Herzfeld.'"

80 George Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, trans. Lola Sachs Dorin (New York: Dial Press, 1946), 149.

81 Franz Jung, *Der Weg nach Unten* (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1961), 113.

82 Ibid., 113–14.

83 Ibid., 114.

84 Grosz, *Little Yes,* 149.

85 März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 25.

86 See Lasker-Schüler, *Werke und Briefe,* 7:144.

87 For an excellent study of this phenomenon, see Matthew Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

CHAPTER FOUR

1 Reviewer signing as P. H., "Bei den Dadaisten. Ein Zeitbild aus Berlin W.," in *Un-*

terhaltungsbeilage der Täglichen Rundschau, April 13, 1918, 170; reprinted in *Urlaute der dadaistischer Poesie. Der Berliner Dada-Abend am 12. April 1918,* ed. Jeanpaul Goergen (Hanover: Postskriptum Verlag, 1994), 79. This review and others also appear in Karin Füllner, ed., *Dada Berlin in Zeitungen: Gedächtnisfeiern und Skandale* (Siegen: Forschungsschwerpunkt Massenmedien und Kommunikation an der Universität-Gesamthochschule-Siegen, 1986). It is notable that the title of this review translates as "With the Dadaists: A Picture of the Times from Berlin's West." As with *Neue Jugend*'s last issue, the chaos of this event is billed here as a reflection of the moment.

2 Huelsenbeck, who cofounded Zurich Dada with Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings in 1916, had returned to Berlin in January 1917. See Huelsenbeck, *En Avant Dada. Eine Geschichte des Dadaismus* (Hanover: Paul Steegemann Verlag, 1920), 26. This reconstruction of Dada's April 12, 1918, program draws on Goergen, *Urlaute,* and Hanne Bergius, *Montage und Metamechanik: Dada Berlin, Artistik von Polaritäten* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 2000), 14–20.

3 *Zang Tumb Tuuum* was published in 1914 as one of Marinetti's "parole in libertá." These poems sought to re-create the Balkan battle of Adrianopoli in October 1912.

4 Anonymous reviewer, "Sind Sie Dadaist?" *Vossische Zeitung,* April 13, 1918; reprinted in Goergen, *Urlaute*, 77.

5 This poem, "Gesang an die Welt," eventually published in November 1918, appears in Goergen, *Urlaute*, 50.

6 The first version of this painting, completed in 1906, showed the actor Rudolf Rittner posing as this Franconian leader of the 1524 Peasant War.

7 P. H., "Da-Da. Literatur-Narrheiten in der Sezession," in *Berliner Börsen-Courier,* no. 172 (April 13,1918); reprinted in Goergen, *Urlaute*, 73.

8 Richard Huelsenbeck, "Dadaistisches Manifest," excerpted in his *En Avant Dada*, 28.

9 P. H., "Da-Da," 74. See Tom Gunning,"The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde," in *Theater and Film: A Comparative Anthology,* ed. Robert Knopf (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 37–45.

10 Jeanpaul Goergen uncovered many of the documents relevant to Heartfield's films in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He published his findings in a series of articles, the most comprehensive of which is "Marke Herzfeld-Filme. Dokumente zu John Heartfields Filmarbeit 1917–1920," in *John Heartfield, Dokumentation. Reaktionen auf eine ungewöhnliche Ausstellung,* ed. Klaus Honnef and Hans-Jürgen von Osterhausen (Berlin: Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, 1994), 23–67. His other articles digesting this material appeared in the early cinema journal *KINtop*. These include the publication of an important letter from Heartfield to his overseer, to be discussed below, and the article "*Soldaten-Lieder* und *Zeichnende Hand*. Propagandafilme von John Heartfield und George Grosz im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amtes 1917/1918," *KINtop* 3 (1994): 129–42. See also his thoroughly researched special issue "George Grosz: Die Filmhälfte der Kunst," ed. Goergen, *Kinemathek* 31, no. 85 (December 1994). Since Goergen published these pieces, the Bundesarchiv has transferred the original documents from the Archive of the Central Division of the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt, Zentralstelle für Auslandienst; hereafter AA/ZfA) in Potsdam to the Political Archive of the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt, Politisches Archiv; hereafter AA/PA) in Berlin. Here I provide both the original and current file numbers for documents mentioned in Goergen's work. Throughout his scholarship on this subject, Goergen has associated Heartfield and Grosz's films with the broader contemporary milieu of early narrative and expressionist cinema. Here I link their films forward to Berlin Dada and to Heartfield's subsequent political montage—in other words, I wish to associate their cinema with the founding of the historical avant-garde.

11 Herzfelde had left his military post without leave and returned to Berlin in the summer of 1918, at which point he joined the proj-

ect. See Wieland Herzfelde, *John Heartfield. Leben und Werk* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1976), 20.

12 Heartfield's presence offstage is perhaps more likely given that, two years later, he became a set designer for Berlin's Reinhardt Theater and Erwin Piscator's Proletarian Theater.

13 Count Harry Kessler acknowledged receipt of Heartfield's report on April 15, 1918, in an April 16 letter to General Counselor Kiliani, head of the Foreign Office's News Department; Bundesarchiv, originally AA/ZfA, 955, Blatt (hereafter Bl.) 65 ff., now AA/PA, file R/901 71955, leaf 65.

14 P. H., "Da-Da," 74.

15 Kessler to General Counselor Kiliani, January 16, 1918, Bundesarchiv, originally AA/ZfA, 952, Bl. 125 ff., now AA/PA, file R/901 71952, leaf 125. A note dated January 23 handwritten directly on this letter confirms that Grosz received this authority.

16 Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," December 1935–early February 1936; this second version of Benjamin's essay remained unpublished in his lifetime. See Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften, Unter Mitwirkung von Theodor W. Adorno und Gershom Scholem, herausgegeben von Rolf Tiedermann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser*, vol. 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989), 350–84. Reproduced in English translation, as "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings,* ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, vol. 3, *1935–1938* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 118.

17 Ibid.

18 Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, ed. John Elderfield, trans. Ann Raimes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 56.

19 Ibid., 71.

20 The performances in Zurich were also aggressive. Dada cofounder Richard Huelsenbeck performed his reduced poems with studied pretension against a racket of drum-banging. Dada was born of deep disillusion and impulsively expressed the moment's dispiriting reality. But it did so outside the traditions of signification that now seemed incapable of describing wartime's unprecedented psychological and perceptual conditions. Its dismantling of signification became, as Ball noted of Huelsenbeck, "an attempt to capture in a clear melody the totality of this unutterable age, with all its cracks and fissures" (*Flight*, 56). In this respect, it resembled Heartfield's efforts to destabilize photographic signification and the meanings associated with social habit and behavior. I maintain, however, that the difference between these two geographic centers of resistance was that many of Zurich Dada's technical innovations were based primarily in formal avant-garde experimentation, whereas Heartfield's arose more directly from advertising practices. Therefore, their annihilation of signification's machinery was much more formally extreme and took place before a small audience largely oriented toward fine art.

21 Ball, *Flight*, 65. I borrow the useful phrase "semantic mobility" from Leah Dickerman. See Dickerman, "Introduction," in *Dada: Zurich, Berlin, Hannover, New York, Paris*, exhibition catalog (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2006), 1–15.

22 As mentioned above, the third cofounder was Ball's spouse, Emmy Hennings. For a thorough discussion of her role in, and contributions to, the movement, see Nicola Behrmann's unpublished dissertation, "Emmy Hennings DADA: Genealogie und Geschichte in der Avantgarde" (New York University, 2010).

23 Huelsenbeck, *En Avant Dada*, 41.

24 See, for example, Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 19–20, and Wieland Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield, Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen, oder, Die Macht der Freundschaft," *Sinn und Form* 6 (1971), the latter reprinted in *Zur Sache. Geschrieben und gesprochen zwischen 18 und 80,* ed. Herzfelde (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1976), 452–53.

25 Heartfield frequently discussed his opposition to the war in his later years. See, for example, Heartfield, "Aus einem Interview mit John Heartfield. 1967," in *John Heartfield. Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit. Selbstzeugnisse, Erinnerungen, Interpretationen,* ed. Roland März and Gertrud Heartfield, 464–69 (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1981). Herzfelde and Grosz state their antiwar fervor most clearly in their coauthored "Die Kunst ist in Gefahr. Ein Orientierungsversuch" (1925); reprinted in Herzfelde, *Zur Sache*, 106–24.

26 Another exception to this rule is Hellmut von Gerlach, the politically progressive editor in chief of the weekly *Die Welt am Montag*. For an English-language account of Kessler's life, see Laird M. Easton, *The Red Count: The Life and Times of Harry Kessler* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

27 "Whatever his talents as a poet, Becher provided Kessler with many personal links not only to young artists and writers more important than himself, but to the pacifists working against both the war and the system that produced it." Easton, *Red Count*, 246. Becher later joined the most aesthetically conservative wing of the German Communist Party and was therefore a frequent critic of Heartfield's agitprop circle in the late 1920s. Von und zu Arco-Zinneberg's visage later famously appeared in the center of Dada artist Hannah Höch's monumental photomontage *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany* (1920).

28 Herzfelde had not yet been reinducted into the armed services. See Günter Riederer, ed., *Harry Graf Kessler. Das Tagebuch Sechster Band 1916–1918,* vol. 6 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2006), 88–90.

29 Herzfelde's contributors included Theodor Däubler, Salomo Friedlaender (Mynona), Albert Ehrenstein, Kasimir Edschmid, and Else Lasker-Schüler, the last of whom, curiously enough, Kessler detested.

30 In fact, Kessler's more secret mission in Basel was to pursue a separate peace with France. See Easton, *Red Count*, 249–65. Kessler arrived in Basel on September 25, 1916.

31 The statement of the 93 was disseminated through the German press on October 4, 1914. For reprints and analyses of the declaration, see Klaus Böhme, ed., *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Reklam Universal-Bibliothek, 1975) 47–49; and Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg and Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf "An die Kulturwelt!" Das Manifest der 93 und die Anfänge der Kriegspropaganda im Ersten Welkrieg* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996).

32 See John Horne and Alan Kramer, "German 'Atrocities' and Franco-German Opinion, 1914: The Evidence of German Soldiers' Diaries," *Journal of Modern History* 66, no. 1 (March 1994): 1–33.

33 See Günter Reiderer, "Einleitung: Zwischen Fronteinsatz, Propagandakrieg und Diplomatie—Harry Graf Kessler und sein Tagebuch in der zweiten Hälfte des Ersten Weltkriegs (1916–1918)," in Riederer, *Harry Graf Kessler*, 24–25.

34 Easton, *Red Count*, 251.

35 On Ludendorff's push for film propaganda, see Klaus Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story: Geschichte eines Filmkozerns* (Munich: Heyne, 1995), trans. and abridged by Robert Kimber and Rita Kimber as *The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

36 Kessler also contracted the famous screenwriter Gustav Meyrink, author of *The Golem*, to produce a script for the Foreign Office's front corporation, the Internationale Gastspiel-Gesellschaft. See AA/PA, files R/901/ 71951, leaves 133–35 and 180–83; R/901 71953, leaf 65; and R/901 71956, leaves 50–51. For more on the Federal Archive's holdings, see note 10 above.

37 *Die neue Jugend* held public events that generally consisted of poetry and prose readings drawn from the periodical's pages and read by the authors. This eighth event, which focused on cinema, however, solicited the participation of "decorators,

camera operators, directors, and critics." Parallel to this, the June 1917 issue of the now banned *Neue Jugend* featured a film review complaining of contemporary cinema's "deep stagnation," a condition that Heartfield's coming movies sought to remedy. See Goergen, "Marke Herzfeld-Filme," 24–25.

38 The incident is discussed in chapter 3. See Wieland's account in Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 15–16. See also Heartfield to Kessler, December 3, 1917, file 48, George Grosz Archive, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Goergen reprints this letter with annotations and an introduction in Heartfield, "Ein wiederentdeckter Brief über expressionistische Filmpläne mit einer Vorbemerkung, von Jeanpaul Goergen," *KINtop 8* (1999): 169–80.

39 Riederer, *Harry Graf Kessler*, 192.

40 Heartfield to Kessler, December 3, 1917. All subsequent quotes on Heartfield's film plans are taken from this letter.

41 Henry Ritter, *Der politische Struwwelpeter. Ein Versuch zur Einigung Deutschlands* (Düsseldorf: Buddaeus, 1849).

42 The revived periodical also sought "a thoroughly objective high quality, into which scarcely perceivable political intentions can be woven," although its intentions were far more fundamentally rallied against the war. Kessler seemed willing to overlook this inclination in *Die neue Jugend*, just as he would in Heartfield's films.

43 In an odd historical coincidence, Hitler's personal photographer and the creator of *Der Struwwelpeter* were both named Heinrich Hoffmann.

44 I borrow the word *suture* from Sabine Kriebel, who brilliantly appropriates this term from cinema to describe the simultaneously filmic and medical character of Heartfield's mature photomontages and their relation to contemporary viewers. See "Manufacturing Discontent: John Heartfield's Mass Medium," *New German Critique*, no. 107 (Summer 2009), 53–88.

45 Rosalind Krauss, "Photography in the Service of Surrealism," in *Photography and Surrealism,* ed. Jane Livingston (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985), 25.

46 See Kessler's breathless description of Grosz's work in Riederer, *Harry Graf Kessler*, 196–98.

47 Kessler to Legation Consul Bernhard von Hahn, News Department of the Foreign Office, May 7, 1918. See AA/PA, file R/901 71104, leaves 1–3.

48 Animation had been most famously pioneered by Winsor McKay. See Donald Crafton, *Before Mickey: The Animated Film, 1898–1928* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). For Germany's early history of film animation, see Annika Schoemann, *Der deutsche Animationsfilm. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart 1909–2001* (Sankt Augustin: Gardez! Verlag, 2003).

49 Paul Wegener, "Die künstlerischen Möglichkeiten des Films" (lecture on April 26, 1916), in *Paul Wegener. Sein Leben und Seine Rollen. Ein Buch von ihm und über ihn*, ed. Paul Moller and Kai Wegener, 102–13 (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1954).

50 Gunning, "Cinema of Attractions," 40–41. Gunning's term "cinema of attractions" of course references Sergei Eisenstein's "theater of attractions," which sought similar techniques—strategies to disrupt narrative absorption—for the stage.

51 Herzfelde, letter to film historian Hans Barkhausen, May 20, 1978, in response to the latter's query, Herzfelde Archive, file 22, Bibliothek, Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Barkhausen quotes from this letter in *Propaganda für Deutschland im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hildesheim: Olms Presse, 1982), 110.

52 Bundesarchiv, originally AA/ZfA, 955, Bl. 65 ff., now AA/PA, file R/901 71955, leaves 65–67. Document reproduced in Goergen, "Marke Herzfeld-Filme," 48–50.

53 Reichskanzler Georg Michaelis to the German embassies in neutral countries, September 29, 1917, AA/PA, file R/901 71693, leaf 2. This missive included a sample of the satirical booklet. Shortly thereafter, the News Department declared in an internal letter to the ministry's Military Division that *Bluff* was too aggressive and therefore unsuitable for Norway. See AA/PA, file

R/901 71693, leaf 12.

54 Most of the Mutt and Jeff features shown in Germany obtained approval from the Berlin censors in April and May of 1917. See *Der Kinematograph,* nos. 538–41, 1917. I have found no record of other American animation that was permitted in Berlin theaters during the war. See the "Berliner Film-Zensur-Entscheidungen," section of *Der Kinematograph*. My assessment of the films' quality is based on a review of wartime animation at the University of California, Los Angeles, Film and Television Archive, 2004. On film distribution and restrictions, see also Herbert Birett, ed., *Verzeichnis in Deutschland gelaufener Filme. Entscheidungen der Filmzensur 1911–1920 Berlin, Hamburg, München, Stuttgart*. (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1980), 398–99; Barkhausen, *Propaganda für Deutschland*, 7–15; and Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter, and Deniz Göktürk, eds., *The German Cinema Book* (London: British Film Institute, 2003).

55 I will use the original Czech spelling of the character's name except when providing original German titles.

56 See Herzfelde's undated first draft of a text to accompany a short film on Heartfield's work, Wieland Herzfelde Archive, file 4/28, Bibliothek, Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Goergen first found this useful document in the early 1990s (cited in "Marke Herzfeld-Filme," 66n58).

57 One of the most famous instances of such projection appeared in Piscator's 1925 play *Trotz alledem!* which opened on the occasion of the German Communist Party's Tenth Congress. The projection, which included newsreel footage of the German revolution, was almost certainly assembled by Heartfield, who was one of the few people with film experience working for Piscator at the time.

58 See George Grosz, "Randzeichnungen zum Thema," in *Schulter an Schulter. Die Abenteuer des braven Soldaten Schwejk*, uniquely titled issue of *Blätter der Piscator-Bühne*, January 1928, 9–10.

59 The consummate account of Grosz's fascination with all things American is Beeke Sell Tower, *Envisioning America: Prints, Drawings, and Photographs by George Grosz and His Contemporaries, 1915–1933*, exhibition catalog (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Busch-Reisinger Museum, 1990). Goergen also discusses Grosz's fascination, specifically his interest in American films ("George Grosz: Die Filmhälfte der Kunst").

60 Heartfield (Helmut Herzfeld) to General Consul Kiliani, head of the Foreign Office's News Department, December 17, 1917, originally AA/ZfA, 951, Bl. 370–71, now AA/PA, file R/901 71951, leaves 370–72.

61 Kiliani's handwritten denial appears on the first page of Heartfield's original letter. Much of the correspondence I reviewed (in the Bundesarchiv) to prepare for this chapter was generated from Basel's oversight of American propaganda films released in Switzerland.

62 For more on the equation of advertising with the United States, see Kevin Repp, "Marketing, Modernity, and 'the German People's Soul': Advertising and Its Enemies in Late Imperial Germany, 1896–1914," in *Selling Modernity: Advertising in Twentieth-Century Germany,* ed. Pamela Swett, S. Jonathan Wiesen, and Jonathan R. Zatlin, 27–51 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

63 Barkhausen, *Propaganda für Deutschland*, 110.

64 Dietrich Neumann, *"Die Wolkenkratzer kommen!" Deutsche Hochhäuser der zwanziger Jahre. Debatten, Projekte, Bauten* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1995). I thank Carla Yanni for bringing my attention to this reference.

65 Crafton, *Before Mickey*, 35–58.

66 For a felicitous rundown of this history, see Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story*.

67 Barkhausen has produced a detailed account of the Lichtbild Gesellschaft in *Propaganda für Deutschland*, 78–142.

68 On the first of these films, see Rainer Rother, "Bei unseren Helden an der Somme. Eine deutsche Antwort auf die Entente-Propaganda," *KINtop* 4 (1995): 123–42.

69 On this tension, see chapters 1 and 3 in Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story*. Erhard Eduard Deutelmoser, minister director of the

Foreign Office's News Department, probably thought that he was currying favor with Ludendorff when he proposed closing any cinema that refused to screen "vaterländische Filme," because distracting fare posed a threat to those authorities most keen to maintain war fervor. Deutelmoser's January 14, 1917, proposal was not accepted. See Barkhausen, *Propaganda für Deutschland,* 74–75.

70 Here I take Paul Virilio's and Bernd Hüppauf's points that war, and particularly World War I, utterly transformed perception. But this transformation was strongly resisted by military leaders, who constructed major barriers between the war's prosecution and the country's commercial cinema. Only slowly could the technical inspiration and impact of war be brought to the cinema, and this was largely done by cinephiles such as Wegener and Heartfield. See Hüppauf, "Experiences of Modern Warfare and the Crisis of Representation," *New German Critique*, no. 59 (1993), 41–77.

71 "Krieg und Kino" (unsigned editorial), *Der Kinematograph* 7, no. 397 (August 5, 1914): n.p. (printed on first and second pages).

72 Ibid.

73 Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 1989), 7–8.

74 "Der Kinematograph im Dienste des Heeres" (The Cinematograph in the Service of the Command) (unsigned editorial), *Der Kinematograph* 7, no. 401 (September 2, 1914): n.p. (printed on first and second pages). The Cinematograph referenced by the title of this editorial and the journal's name was an apparatus, invented in France in the early 1890s, that served as a camera, developer, and projector.

75 Published in *Der Kinematograph* 7, no. 407 (October 14, 1914). Analysis in Barkhausen, *Propaganda für Deutschland*, 21–23.

76 See Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus, "Oskar Messters Beitrag zum Ersten Weltkrieg," *KINtop* 3 (1994): 103–17. See also Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story,* chap. 1.

77 "Der Mangel an Aktualitäten" (Lack of Relevance) (unsigned editorial), *Der Kinematograph* 7, no. 400 (August 26, 1914): n.p. (printed on first and second pages). The editorial's German title offered a play on words, with *Aktualitäten* meaning both current events and relevance or topicality.

78 Barkhausen, *Propaganda für Deutschland*, 68.

79 "Das Ende der Kriegsaufnahmen" (The End of War Footage) (unsigned editorial), *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 8, no. 12 (March 20, 1915): 14.

80 Ibid., 14–18.

81 Martin Kopp, *Der Kinematograph,* May 12, 1915.

82 Fritz Terveen, "Die Anfänge der deutschen Filmkriegsberichterstattung in den Jahren 1914–1916," *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 6 (June 1956): 318, quoted in Barkhausen, *Propaganda für Deutschland*, 22.

83 Hüppauf, "Experiences of Modern Warfare," 46.

84 Emscher, "Zensurschwierigkeiten und kein Ende" (Censorship Difficulties without End), *Der Kinematograph 7,* no. 416 (December 16, 1914): n.p. (printed on first three pages).

85 Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel*, trans. Michael Hofmann (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 7–8. Jünger published his account in 1920.

86 Ibid., 8.

87 This feature was "banned for the duration of the war." See "Berliner Film-Zensur-Entscheidungen," *Der Kinematograph*, May 9, 1917.

88 Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 6.

89 Goergen, "Marke-Herzfeld Filme," 32. On pages 31–33, Goergen, who possesses a vast knowledge of early German cinema, postulates further on this history of wartime animation. The details I provide here draw on this article and my perusal of *Der Kinematograph* and *Die Licht-Bild-Bühne.*

90 März and Heartfield, "Aus einem Interview mit John Heartfield: 1967," 464.

91 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 118.

92 Ibid.

93 On the relationship between Tret'iakov and Benjamin, see Maria Gough, "Paris, Capital

of the Soviet Avant-Garde," *October,* no. 101 (Summer 2002), 53–83.

94 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 119.

95 Ibid. Tobias Wilke has recently argued that Benjamin used the word *taktisch* to signify both "tactile" and "tactical," thereby producing one of the philosopher's subtle dialectical word plays. This interpretation produces a subtle alteration in the meaning of the passage, perhaps strengthening Benjamin's understanding of the haptic as a specific strategy in Dada's art. I thank Wilke for his counsel on this issue. See Tobias Wilke, *Medien der Unmittelbarkeit. Dingkonzepte und Wahrnehmungstechniken 1918–1939* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2010).

96 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 119.

97 For a detailed analysis of Benjamin's notion of the moral shock effect and Berlin Dada, see Brigid Doherty, "Berlin Dada: Montage and the Embodiment of Modernity, 1916–1920" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1996), 85–86.

98 See Raoul Hausmann, "Synthetisches Cino der Malerei" (1918), in *Dada Berlin. Texte, Manifeste, Aktionen,* ed. Hanne Bergius and Karl Riha, 29–32 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977).

99 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 118.

100 Walter Benjamin, "Erfahrung und Armut" (December 1933), *Gesammelte Schriften* 2:218. Reference and translation from Miriam Hansen, "'Of Mice and Ducks': Benjamin and Adorno on Disney," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 92, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 41–42. Hansen's essay has been indispensable in preparing this discussion of Benjamin and animation.

101 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 118.

102 Ibid., 130.

103 Pola Negri, *Memoirs of a Star* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 139–40.

104 Ibid., 141–42.

105 Ibid., 142.

CHAPTER FIVE

1 Hecht makes this assertion in his autobiography. Grosz, having met Hecht through a friend, recalled that "he was perhaps the first one to come to Berlin, except for the military commissions." George Grosz, *George Grosz: An Autobiography*, trans. Nora Hodges (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 138. See Hecht, *A Child of the Century* (New York: Primus, 1954), 267–321.

2 Hecht's reports in the *Chicago Daily News* tapered off in July. In his autobiography, however, he claims to have stayed in the country for a year and a half. Hecht scholar Florice Whyte Kovan, however, suggests that he indeed returned to Chicago sometime during the summer of 1919 (personal e-mail, September 2008). While in Berlin and Munich, Hecht interviewed some of the central figures from the lost war and the ascendant Weimar regime, including General Ludendorff, former head of the High Command, and the new president, Friedrich Ebert. Grosz, always in the company of Heartfield, later wrote fondly of his time with Hecht. The American, then billeted in the Hotel Adlon, played jazz piano as Grosz sat adoringly nearby. Hecht's wife Marie Armstrong photographed these antics; one of the pictures is reprinted in Hecht, *Art and Architecture on 1001 Afternoons in Chicago: Essays and Tales of Artists and the Cityscape of the 1920s*, ed. with commentary by Florice Whyte Kovan (Washington, DC: Snickersnee Press, 2002), 72. Kovan is a highly informed source on Hecht's biography and writing. I gratefully thank her for her tremendous help in sorting out Hecht's time in the German capital.

3 Reported by Hecht in the *Chicago Daily News* on May 9 and May 27, 1919. Grosz reports that "as a symbol of his honorary membership, he was presented with a beer mug, painted black and half filled with sand. Unfortunately, however, that symbol was grabbed from Ben (who was a mere spectator) in the usual fist fight between dadaists and the enraged audience, and shattered." Grosz, *Autobiography*, 140.

4 Hecht, *Child*, 269. As I wrote these words, Holland Cotter of the *New York Times* published a review of a P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center exhibition entitled *1969*. His

text begins thus: "In the fall of 1969, the country was having a nervous breakdown. . . ." He goes on to criticize the show for stressing MoMA's holdings of conceptual art and, consequently, highlighting works that do not necessarily reflect the moment of crisis, at least according to his temperament. He asks whether "the old notion that art reflects, in some profound way, the era that produced it [became] invalid as work grew increasingly self-referential and inaccessible." It is precisely these questions of self-referentiality versus contextual embeddedness that I believe Heartfield had to address at this moment of upheaval. See Cotter, "The Year of Tumult," *New York Times*, Friday, October 31, 2009, C21, C27.

5 Hecht, *Child*, 282–83.

6 Elias Canetti, *The Torch in My Ear*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1982), 270–71.

7 This montage was published on the covers of *Der Dada*, no. 3 (April 1920), and the cabaret playbill *Schall und Rauch*, no. 6 (May 1920), both designed by Heartfield.

8 Raoul Hausmann, "Fotomontage," in *a bis z* (May 1931), 61–62, translated in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 652.

9 From a 1944 discussion between Heartfield and Francis Klingender. See "Francis D. Klingender: Diskussion mit John Heartfield über Dadaismus und Surrealismus. 1944," in *John Heartfield. Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit. Selbstzeugnisse. Erinnerungen. Interpretationen,* ed. Roland März and Gertrud Heartfield, 464–69 (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1981), 59.

10 März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 60.

11 Wieland Herzfelde, "Zur Eintleitung," in *Erste Internationale Dada-Messe*, exhibition catalog (Berlin, 1920), n.p.

12 Raoul Hausmann, *Scharfrichter der bürgerlichen Seele—Raoul Hausmann in Berlin 1900–1933. Unveröfftentlichte Briefe, Texte, Dokumente aus den Künstler-Archiven der Berlinischen Galerie*, ed. Eva Züchner (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1998), 121. Taken from Adrian Sudhalter's unpublished doctoral dissertation, "Johannes Baader and the Demise of Wilhelmine Culture: Architecture, Dada, and Social Critique, 1875–1920" (Institute of Fine Arts, New York, 2005), 231.

13 In order, the bluffs date to July 30, 1918, early September 1918, and April 1, 1919. See Sudhalter, "Johannes Baader," 237–38.

14 Ibid., 220.

15 The one exception to this distinction would be Baader and Hausmann's November 1918 special issue of *Die Strasse frei!* with the title "Gegen dem Besitz" ("Against Private Property").

16 This chapter concentrates on politics and photomontage as tightly conjoined concerns within Berlin's Dada movement, and the role of Germany's revolution in defining this linkage, particularly for Heartfield and Grosz. The relation between political revolution and photography, as much as a rejection of fine art, would fundamentally drive Heartfield's work in the two decades to come. The following pages thus partly leave an emphasis on Dada's other key concerns, such as its fascination with war cripples and its disgust for traditional forms of art, to existing accounts.

17 For histories of this moment, see Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classic Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), and Hans Mommsen, *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy*, trans. Elborg Forster and Larry Eugene Jones (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

18 The last piece of correspondence on the film project was a handwritten notation by Wilhelm von Radowitz, an important diplomat and politician who was the chancelor's undersecretary at the time and, in this capacity, represented the Foreign Services Delegation Council. Dated July 24, 1918, this note is scribed over a letter from Johannes Oertel of Die Internationale Gastspiel-Gesellschaft (the News Department's cover corporation) to the News Department's offices. The final work contract between Heartfield (Helmut Herzfeld) and

Die Internationale Gastspiel-Gesellschaft was signed by the corporation's representative on June 6 and by Heartfield on July 6, after which it entered the Foreign Service's records. For transcripts of the letter and the contract, see Jeanpaul Goergen, "Marke Herzfeld-Filme. Dokumente zu John Heartfields Filmarbeit 1917–1920," in *John Heartfield, Dokumentation. Reaktionen auf eine ungewöhnliche Ausstellung,* ed. Klaus Honnef and Hans-Jürgen von Osterhausen, (Berlin: Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, 1994), 54–58.

19 For Heartfield's 1951 resume, which reports these assignments, see Michael Krejsa and Petra Albrecht, "Biografische Dokumentation," in *John Heartfield*, exhibition catalog, ed. Peter Pachnicke and Klaus Honnef (Berlin: Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, 1991), 392–93.

20 Grosz's economic lot varied, according to the numerous letters he exchanged with Falk. At the very least, he secured from his patron the promise of a monthly 300-mark "*Stipendium*" and the occasional 600 Marks when the smaller sum was not forthcoming. See letter from Falk to Grosz, dated July 12, 1918, George Grosz Archive, Akademie der Künste, folder 28. Beth Irwin Lewis describes Falk, a little known character, as "a wholesaler who bought raw materials for the German army." See Lewis, *George Grosz*, 30. In August 1918 Grosz also signed a carefully negotiated contract with the Munich art dealer Hans Goltz, which as of the beginning of September guaranteed him an additional 500-mark monthly income (see folders 575 and 576, George Grosz Archive). The painter, it seems, was finally earning broad recognition, making possible an income outside the film work for Heartfield and the portfolio publications with Herzfelde. By October he had managed to secure enough income for an apartment in the elegant west end of Berlin; he moved there from the distant South End early that month. See letter to Otto Schmalhausen, October 10, 1918, in Grosz, *George Grosz Briefe 1913–1959*, ed. Herbert Knust (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1979), 80.

21 The general breakdown of the war effort meant that, although AWOL, Herzfelde was less likely at this point to be snapped up by military police. See Wieland Herzfelde, "Der Schwur auf der Landstraße," in *Immergrün. Merkwürdige Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen eines fröhliches Waisenknaben* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1981), 203-8.

22 Interestingly, Hugo Ball deemed an expressionist exhibition organized by Schickele under the auspices of *Die weißen Blätter* to be nothing more than "cultural propaganda for Germany." See Ball, *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, ed. John Elderfield, trans. Ann Raimes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 54.

23 Letter from the Malik Verlag (signed by Herzfelde) to René Schickele, dated July 9, 1918. George Grosz Archive, folder 87. The regular appearance of Grosz's pictures, Herzfelde's draft contract asserted (claiming the backing of Count Kessler), would "absolutely gather attention and assure the journal's effectiveness" as a critical publication. Herzfelde had built a good part of *Die neue Jugend*'s appeal around the shocking allure of Grosz's work, and he now hoped to do the same for Schickele's *Die weiße Blätter*, the difference being that the new drawings would name names as the war dragged onward into mass torpor.

24 Letter from Grosz to Schmalhausen, July 9, 1918, in Grosz, *Briefe*, 77.

25 See *Sozialistische deutsche Karikatur. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. 1848–1978*, ed. Herald Olbrich (Berlin: Eulenspiegel Verlag, 1978).

26 Rosamunde Neugebauer, Gräfin von der Schulenberg, *George Grosz. Macht und Ohnmacht satirischer Kunst* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1993), 29.

27 *Harry Graf Kessler. Das Tagebuch sechster Band 1916–1918*, ed. Günter Riederer (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2006), 294. I have used Charles Kessler's fine translations from Count Kessler's diaries where possible (see note 33). All other translations of the count's entries are mine.

28 Ibid., 295.

29 Kessler was alarmed enough to report Herzfelde's observations four days later to Hans von Haeften, the director of the Foreign Office's New Service, which was then, of course, employing Heartfield to direct propaganda films (ibid., 300). Intriguingly, he spoke with von Haeften during a meeting about the Russian Revolution attended by, among others, the chancellor himself. Later, on June 27, shortly before Herzfelde abandoned his post for Berlin to begin his publishing effort, the poet sent Kessler a letter warning that his judgment had not changed and if the war were not concluded that year, then "Germany could be headed toward a catastrophe." Riederer, *Harry Graf Kessler*, 294.

30 It did publish a fawning tribute to Heartfield by Wieland, a poem entitled "Johnny." *Die weißen Blätter* v. 5 (November 1918). This is the first published record of Heartfield's new name.

31 Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz: The Berlin Years* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 71.

32 Ibid.

33 Graf Harry Kessler, *Berlin in Lights: The Diaries of Count Harry Kessler, 1918–1937*, trans. and ed. Charles Kessler (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 64.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 9.

36 Russia's withdrawal from the conflict under its new Bolshevik regime in late 1917 had temporarily given hope to the High Command.

37 "It is the other way about from France," Kessler noted by way of comparing this moment to the great eighteenth-century revolt: "The provinces are carrying the revolution to the capital." Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 5.

38 Riederer, *Harry Graf Kessler*, 622.

39 The Kaiser was not in his palace at the time but in the city of Spa to consult with his generals, a clear indication of his intent to continue the war rather than work with the new, more democratic government which had come to power in Berlin shortly before the revolution's outbreak.

40 The Spartacus League was initially formed in August 1914 as an opposition group within the SPD calling itself Die Gruppe Internationale (International Group). At the time of Germany's revolution, the Spartacus League was a faction of the German Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) which had itself split from the SPD in April 1917 to protest the majority socialist support for further war bonds, the financial instrument making Germany's participation in the conflict possible.

41 Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 56.

42 Ibid., 51.

43 As historian Hans Mommsen explains: "Deceived not only by unrealistic press reports and censorship but also by the propaganda of the High Military Command and the [hard-right-wing] Fatherland Party, many Germans still clung to their hopes of a German victory. . . . The fact that the public was completely unprepared for the possibility of defeat contributed to the paralytic resignation and deep bitterness that spread through the country." Mommsen, *Weimar Democracy*, 12.

44 Alfred Heller, "Zum Geleit," *Die Kultur der Reklame* 1, no. 1 (January 1919): 82.

45 See chapter 2, "Berlin," in Joan Weinstein, *The End of Expressionism: Art and the November Revolution in Germany, 1918–1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

46 From a circular letter accompanying a draft of the Novembergruppe manifesto, in Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 213.

47 This advertisement for *The Small Grosz Portfolio* ran on the last page of Malik's first postwar periodical, discussed in the next section.

48 The German Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), as part of the provisional ruling coalition, chose to participate in the upcoming National Assembly election. The Spartacus League steadfastly refused to take part in this vote and advocated instead a nonparliamentary government of

workers and soldiers councils (*Räte*) that no industry or military constituency could control. Only thus, as Rosa Luxemburg stressed, could the "full socialization of the economy proceed."

49 This fascinating transcript, recovered from an émigré to New York, was published as *Der Gründungsparteitag der KPD. Protokoll und Materialien*, ed. Hermann Weber (Frankfurt am Main: Europäisches Verlagsanstalt, 1969).

50 Ernst Bauer, "Das politische Gesicht der Strasse," *Die Kultur der Reklame* 1, no. 2 (March 1919): 165. There seems to have been no February issue, which would ordinarily have been number 2.

51 The party also produced similarly dense fliers while flooding the streets with agitators, as discussed below.

52 For an excellent discussion of the Anti-Bolshevist League in English, see Sherwin Simmons, "Grimaces on the Walls: Anti-Bolshevist Posters and the Debate about Kitsch," *Design Issues* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 16–40.

53 Hans Friedeberger, "Das politische Plakat der Revolutionszeit," *Das Plakat* 10, no. 7 (July 1919): 270. See also Simmons, "Grimaces on the Walls."

54 The claim, which I believe to be false, appears frequently through the Heartfield literature. In his 1951 vita, the artist wrote that he joined the KPD on December 31, 1918, while others, such as Sergei Tret'iakov, wrote that "Heartfield became a member of the German Communist Party at its founding." Later, it was Wieland Herzfelde who most prominently asserted that he, Heartfield, and Grosz had been the party's first three members and that, in this capacity, they received their party booklets directly from Luxemburg (although the cash-strapped organization could ill afford the lightning-fast printing of membership booklets at this heady juncture). See Krejsa and Albrecht, "Biografische Dokumentation," 393; Sergei Tret'iakov, *Heartfield: A Monograph* (Moscow: ISOGIZ [Moscow State Publishing House], 1936), 65; and Wieland Herzfelde, "John Heartfield und George Grosz. Zum 75. Geburtstag meines Brüders," *Die Weltbühne* 21 (June 15, 1966): 747.

55 Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 66.

56 Ibid., 60.

57 Notes by Francis Klingender from discussion with John Heartfield, in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 59. On the KPD's dearth of visual propaganda, see Barbara McCloskey, *George Grosz and the Communist Party: Art and Radicalism in Crisis, 1918 to 1936* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), chap. 2.

58 Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 60.

59 *Jedermann* has since become famous as an unmistakable signal of the Berlin avant-garde's strong political turn. The classic case for this is made in Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, trans. David Britt (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 101–36. Here, however, I suggest that *Jedermann* was largely brought together outside of Dada's immediate millieu.

60 The attribution for these two pictures has been inconsistent. But given that the two friends were still inseparable and that, by this point, the only thing they did autonomously were Grosz's drawing and Heartfield's typography and graphic design, the chances are good that they made these images together, just as they collaboratively "assembled" further photomontages eight months later.

61 See Grosz, *Autobiography*, 10, 32.

62 "Die Berliner Moral an der Litfaßsäule," *Das Plakat* 10, no. 3 (March 1919): 171.

63 Although this approach introduced itself in photographic form on the magazine's cover page, it was not medium-specific. On *Jedermann*'s third page, a drawing by Grosz satirizing the notorious "Anti-Bolshevist" campaign of the revolution's first months focuses on a poster depicting a rampaging communist anarchist that scares citizens into the gaping jaws of the Catholic church. Such posters were widely condemned at the time as vulgar and excessive, as noted previously. Below Grosz's drawing, a notice calls for extras to act in a new film entitled *Wilhelm's Return*, a spoof on the rumored

return of the Kaiser from his Dutch exile. This notice resonated against a background in which newly uncensored newsreels and "enlightenment" films held sway over German audiences, dispersing radical, sensational, and sometimes scandalous footage that would have never passed censors' muster during the war. On the back page, a semipornographic poem by Walter Mehring, entitled "Der Coitus im Dreimäderlhaus" ("Coitus in the House of the Three Lasses"), satirized the SPD-led government and the reemerging military. Mehring's poem adopted its conceit from a tremendously popular operetta then being performed in Berlin. Entitled *Das Dreimäderlhaus* (*House of the Three Lasses*), it was a sappy Austrian dramatization of Franz Schubert's love life, complete with simplified orchestrations of his music, which Mehring's poem spoofs in its lyric form. Even *Jedermann*'s distribution method followed down-market models. Certain that no kiosk or news seller would carry the politically radical periodical, Herzfelde told Count Kessler that "he wanted to ram home the first number with the public by adopting fairground methods." As Mehring later recalled,"We rented an open-top carriage of the sort used for Pentecost outings, and also a little band, complete with frock coats and top hats, who used to play at ex-servicemen's funerals. We, the editorial staff, paced behind, six strong, bearing bundles of *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball* instead of wreaths." The spectacle achieved the desired effect. In the wealthy west end of town, Mehring remembered, the response from upright citizens was negative. "But our sales mounted sharply as we entered the lower-middle-class and working-class districts of north and east Berlin." There "the band was greeted with cheers and applause as it played its two star pieces," which, like the music of *Das Dreimäderlhaus*, were highly sentimental (although intended for military funerals). The satirical procession, and the magazine itself, were "greeted with delight as spontaneous as the '*on y danse*' of the Paris mob in front of the Bastille." Here the Malik contributors had brought the content and method of their new periodical to the "feverish street," which, according to the *BIZ*, had become the new political "stomping ground of passions." And there they transformed the printed photomontage, text, and drawings into a public performance. Just as Heartfield and Grosz had learned to reanimate the photograph with the new dynamism of the crass, so too did the contributors to *Jedermann* act to draw the attention of, and sales from, their new audiences. See Sabine Hake, *The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany, 1907–1933* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 109; Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 62; and Friedrich Kroner, "Die Fiebernde Strasse. Großstadtbilder von heute," *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 20 (May 18, 1919).

64 Heller, "Zum Geleit," 82.

65 What he likely didn't know at the time was that *Jedermann*'s warning of a coming clampdown on the revolution in Munich, on the issue's fourth page, likely provoked his arrest. Herzfelde's account, "Schutzhaft. Erlebnisse vom 7. bis 20. März 1919 bei den Berliner Ordnungstruppen," occupied the entire second issue of the same journal, now renamed *Die Pleite* (March 1919); reprinted in Herzfelde, *Zur Sache. Geschrieben und gesprochen zwischen 18 und 80* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1976), 31–50.

66 According to Kessler, Grosz escaped by showing false papers. Walter Mehring reports more specifically that he showed a false military pass and pretended to be an American cartoonist. The painter then hid at the house of his girlfriend's mother. Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 88–89; Walter Mehring, *Berlin Dada* (Zurich: Peter Schifferli Verlag, 1959), 65–66.

67 This friend was Simon Guttmann, who visited Kessler on March 10. After his release, Herzfelde told the count,"The prisoners' bitterness is so great that to plead for the life of a single bourgeois is downright dangerous. Should their side come to power, they want to exterminate the middle class, one and all." As Kessler noted, "The picture Wieland paints is of a totally dehumanized military [of *Freikorps* irregulars] generating

an equally dehumanized bloodthirstiness." This division, and that between the SPD and KPD, would define Weimar's dominant political and social positions; this chasm of irredeemable hostility was ultimately reflected in a Reichstag split between large blocs of National Socialist and Communist members, with a rump SPD wedged between them. See Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 85, 90.

68 Ibid., 80.

69 Ibid., 90. According to Kessler, the KPD had already complained about *Jedermann*'s "flippancy." Herzfelde's decision to forge a more serious approach may have also been influenced by this criticism.

70 Modified translation of ibid., 91. For the full text of this day's diary entry, see *Harry Graf Kessler. Das Tagebuch siebter Band 1919–1923*, ed. Angela Reinthal (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2007), 201. Each volume of Kessler's diaries, reprinted by the Cotta Verlag, is managed by a different editor; the series is overseen by editors Roland Kamzelak and Ulrich Ott.

71 Franz Pfemfert, "Ich schneide die Zeit aus," *Die Aktion* 30, nos. 16/17 (April 17, 1915): 214.

72 Johannes Baader, "Die Hexenküche Dada: Zum zehnten Jahrestag ihrer Eröffnung," *Der Kreis* 3, no. 4 (April 1926): 179–80.

73 To use scholar Hanne Bergius's metaphor, each scandalous press sensation after 1918 became a virtual "snowball thrown in the air, where it then accumulates thousands of opinions" and becomes a collectively produced mass event. See Bergius, "Dada Berlin and Its Aesthetic of Effect: Playing the Press," in *Dada and the Press*, ed. Harriett Watts and Stephen Foster, vol. 9 of *Crisis and the Arts: The History of Dada*, ed. Foster (New Haven, CT: Thomson Gale, 2004), 67.

74 These included *Die Pleite* and *Der Gegner*, the latter an existing journal that Herzfelde assumed coeditorship of, and brought in-house, in mid-1919.

75 George Grosz and Wieland Herzfelde, "Die Kunst ist in Gefahr. Ein Orientierungsversuch" (1925); reprinted in Herzfelde, *Zur Sache*, 118–19. Hanne Bergius uses this quote as the point of departure for her first book on Berlin's Dada movement, *Das Lachen Dadas* (Giesen: Anabas, 1989).

76 This declaration was originally billed as "Proclamation Dada" but later published under this longer title. See Hanne Bergius, *"Dada Triumphs!" Dada Berlin, 1917–1923: Artistry of Polarities. Montages-Metamechanics-Manifestations*, trans. Brigitte Pichon, vol. 5 in the series *Crisis and the Arts*, ed. Stephen Foster (New Haven, CT: Thomson Gale, 2003), 55.

77 See the leaflet for this performance, reprinted in Bergius, *"Dada Triumphs!"* as figure 27. In the "race," the sewing machine reportedly stitched an endless loop of mourning cloth while the typewriter shot through sheets of paper. One can only imagine how, with the March violence still resonating through Berlin, the shots Grosz fired must have struck raw nerves. The dancer and cabaret performer Veleska Gert later recalled improvising a syncopation to the sound of the sewing and typing din in order to calm the riled audience. For a sharp reconstruction and analysis of Berlin Dada's postwar performances, see Bergius, *"Dada Triumphs!"* 52–71.

78 Hecht's report on this performance published as "Hoch Das Dadaismus," *Milwaukee Arts Monthly* 1, no. 2 (October 1922): 13, reprinted as "Dada," in Kovan, *Art and Architecture*, 74.

79 Bergius, "Dada Triumphs!" 63.

80 Ibid., 62.

81 Richard Huelsenbeck, *Dadaco* (1920), n.p. This is the unpublished anthology of the movement's history.

82 For Heartfield's description of Dada as a revolt of the "lower impulses," see notes by Klingender from discussion with Heartfield, in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 57.

83 As Kessler reported, "A visit from Wieland Herzfelde. He was depressed and thinks that the revolution is probably over." Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 108.

84 Raoul Hausmann, "Dada in Europa," *Der Dada* 3 (1920), n.p.

85 Bauer, "Das politische Gesicht," 164.

86 Ibid.

87 See "The Militarized Cyborg," chapter 4 in Biro, *Dada Cyborg*.

88 Bauer, "Das politische Gesicht," 164–65.

89 For example, Werner Liebbrand, a psychiatrist at Berlin's Charité Hospital, suggested, in an article published in at least two daily papers, that the art of the Dadaists belonged in the exhibition he had staged of his own patients' work. See Brigid Doherty, "'We are All Neurasthenics!' or, The Trauma of Dada Montage," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 90–91.

90 The Werbedienst der deutschen sozialistischen Republik (publicity office of the German Socialist Republic) recruited the country's greatest talents in advertising art. Paul Zech, "Reichpropaganda," Die *Kultur der Reklame* 2, no. 2 (February 1920): 96. The next chapter defines postwar understandings of agitation and propaganda more specifically.

91 Friedeberger, "Das politische Plakat," 260.

92 Peter Rosen, *Das Plakat* 10, no. 7 (July 1919): 239.

93 Stefan Großmann, "Die Zeit der Redner," *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 28 (December 22, 1918): 404.

94 Ibid. Indeed, Großmann was fascinated not just by the speakers but by their audiences: "Peculiar about this phenomenon is the following: that they all find reception and are listened to with passion."

95 Hannah Höch, "Erinnerungen an DADA. Ein Vortrag 1966," in *Hannah Höch 1889–1978. Ihr Werk, Ihr Leben, Ihre Freunde* (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1989), 204.

96 Within this battle of rhetoric, it was apparent that the radical left excelled. The *BIZ* continually praised representatives of the German Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) for its leader's skills in gesticulating compellingly and attracting large audiences, although Bauer noted that sometimes "a prearranged game of question and answer dishonestly" lured crowds to conclusions. "The Spartacists and their spiritual brothers initiated this practice quite cleverly." Such techniques often agitated crowds to moblike violence. Kessler complained that when an advisor of SPD leader Friedrich Ebert tried to enter discussion with a "well-dressed Spartacus adherent" who had "a pleasant manner," the crowed began jeering the advisor to the point that he felt threatened and fled for safety. See Bauer, "Das politische Gesicht," 166; Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 42–43.

97 This quote also appeared as one of three epigraphs that begin Herzfelde's introduction to the Dada Fair, which was printed in the exhibition's small catalog. For more on the significance of Wiertz's quote, see Brigid Doherty's introduction to the translation of Wieland Herzfelde, "Introduction to the First International Dada Fair," *October*, no. 105 (2003), 97.

98 See Matthew Witkovsky's exhibition catalog *Foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918–1945* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2007), 29. The model of the film still figures prominently in the next chapter.

99 Kessler, *Berlin in Lights*, 52–53.

100 Stern was the sister of Käthe Kollwitz. See Lisbeth Stern, "Kunst: Politische Plakate," *Sozialistische Monatshefte* 25, no. 52 (March 24, 1919): 295.

101 Friedberger, "Das politische Plakat," 274.

102 Adolf Behne, "Dada 1920," *Die Freiheit* (July 9, 1920), n.p.

103 Lu Märtens, "Geschichte, Satyre, Dada und Weiteres," *Die rote Fahne* 3 (August 24, 1920): n.p. Translation adapted from Brigid Doherty's unpublished dissertation, "Berlin Dada: Montage and the Embodiment of Modernity, 1916–1920" (University of California, Berkeley, 1996), xxiii.

104 Gertrud Alexander, "Dada. Ausstellung am Lützowufer 13, Kunstsalon Buchard," *Die rote Fahne* (July 25, 1920); reprinted in *Die rote Fahne: Kritik, Theorie, Feuilleton: 1918–1933*, ed. Manfred Brauneck, 75–78 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973).

105 John Heartfield and George Grosz, "Der Kunstlump," in *Der Gegner* 1, nos. 10–12 (1920): 48–56. Reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 104–12.

106 The Dada Fair catalog referred to the ex-

hibited works of art as "products" (*Erzeugnisse*). To a significant degree, the Dadaists' use of this word referenced the trade fair where exhibitors displayed their wares, rather than the art exhibition where artists presented their works of self-expression. This constituted another of Berlin Dada's spoofs of traditionally conceived art and, more specifically, the commodification of art. For more on this facet of the Dada Fair's critique, see Doherty, "Berlin Dada," 147–49.

107 For a thorough discussion of Berlin Dada and its vision of Russian art, see Kate Winskell, "Dada, Russia and Modernity, 1915–1922" (PhD diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1995).

108 It seems that Huelsenbeck sold copies of this manifesto at the April 12 "lecture evening." See *Urlaute der dadaistischer Poesie. Der Berliner Dada-Abend am 12. April 1918,* ed. Jeanpaul Goergen (Hanover: Postskriptum Verlag, 1994).

109 As mentioned earlier, this photomontage appeared on the covers of the third issue of *Der Dada* (April 1920) and the sixth issue of *Schall und Rauch* (May 1920).

110 This proposition as to why Dada, particularly in Zurich and Berlin, continually occupied itself with its own history, is made by Leah Dickerman in her Dada catalog. See Dickerman, "Introduction," in *Dada: Zurich, Berlin, Hannover, New York, Paris* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2006), 1–15.

111 Huelsenbeck, "Dadaistisches Manifest," excerpted in his *En Avant Dada. Eine Geschichte des Dadaismus* (Hanover: Paul Steegemann Verlag, 1920), 28.

112 Huelsenbeck, "Dadaistisches Manifest," 28.

CHAPTER SIX

1 Wieland Herzfelde explained in 1976 that he was able to open the store thanks to the financial support and connections of a wealthy friend. See Herzfelde, "Wirtschaftliche Schwierigkeiten und 'Die Malik-Buchhandlung'"; reprinted in *Der Malik-Verlag 1916–1947. Chronik eines Verlages*, ed. Jo Hauberg, Giuseppe de Siati, and Thies Ziemke (Kiel: Neuer Malik Verlag, 1986), 63–66. For a fine English language source on Malik that stresses its Weimar-era publications, see *The Malik Verlag 1916–1947: Berlin, Prague, New York*, exhibition catalog, ed. James Fraser and Steven Heller (New York: Goethe House, 1984).

2 Even the firm's move into this custom-designed showroom kindled conflict when the landlord, having learned of the press's political orientation, physically blocked its books from rolling over his building's threshold. See Herzfelde, "Wirtschaftliche Schwierigkeiten," 65.

3 Heartfield had always been Malik's designer, advertiser, and general gopher, as noted in the previous chapters. Herzfelde specifically calls him the press's designer and advertiser in Herzfelde, *John Heartfield. Leben und Werk,* 3rd ed. (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1976), 33.

4 In "Wirtschaftliche Schwierigkeiten," Herzfelde wrote that he believed Malik had rented this space for two and a half years. But his archive contains correspondence received at the address at least until August 15, 1927, roughly four years after the press moved in. See letter from Wilhelm Pieck on this date, addressed to Köthenerstr. 38, W 9 Berlin, and stamped as received the same day. Wieland Herzfelde Archive, Akademie der Künste, folder 76.

5 *Die rote Fahne* 7, no. 123 (Sunday, October 5, 1924): n.p.

6 Eckhard Siepmann argues that such a focused "arguing photomontage" could never have appeared so early in Heartfield's oeuvre. He makes the case that a version of this composition first appeared in 1934, when the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* published the monteur's *After Twenty Years* on the two-decade anniversary of the war's declaration."Doubt," he writes, "arises from the photomontage's very structure—

a wealth of relationships within the full montage whose striking form Heartfield otherwise never reached in the nineteen-twenties." He is right to stress the rich ties among the poster's three laconic fragments. Such carefully honed interior relationships were certainly absent from Heartfield's wildly ruptured Dada photomontage of 1919–1920. Peter Zimmerman, however, has suggested to me that a Czech customs stamp on the reverse of the poster affirms that it was part of a traveling collection of Heartfield's works, initially assembled for the 1929 *Film und Foto Ausstellung* (Film and Photography Exhibition). The collection remained relatively intact and traveled from show to show through the 1930s. This piece would have traveled to Moscow, where it was exhibited in 1931; to Prague in 1934, when Heartfield needed it for the double-spread reprinting in the *AIZ*; and then on to further exhibitions in Paris in 1935 and New York in 1938, where Herzfelde could have collected it along with Heartfield's other exhibited work once he arrived in the United States in 1939. Zimmerman also suggests that the poster's enamel-like touchup paint dates to the years before Heartfield began hiring airbrush-wielding retouchers. In this chapter, I suggest that if one expands the notion of "structure" and "relationship" to include mechanisms of meaning such as narrative, allegory, and identity, than it is indeed possible to find a place where Heartfield reached this "striking form" in the early 1920s: the book cover. See Siepmann, *Montage: John Heartfield vom Club Dada zur* Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung (Berlin: Elefanten Press Verlag, 1977), 80. My discussion with Peter Zimmermann, head of the Art Collection (Kunstsammlung) of the Archiv der Akademie der Künste Berlin, took place on May 4, 2007. I warmly thank Herr Zimmermann for his enthusiastic help.

7 Sergei Tret'iakov, *John Heartfield: A Monograph* (Moscow: IZOGIZ [Moscow State Publishing House], 1936), translated into German and partially republished in *John Heartfield. Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit. Selbstzeugnisse, Erinnerungen, Interpretationen,* ed. Roland März and Gertrud Heartfield (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1981), 297–98. This translation from Russian to English is by Devin Fore, whom I warmly thank for his help.

8 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 44.

9 George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, John Heartfield, and Rudolf Schlichter, "Die Gesetze der Malerei" (September 1920), in *Hannah Höch. Eine Lebenscollage*, ed. Cornelia Thater-Schulz (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1989), 696–98.

10 On the relation between Russian constructivism and Berlin Dada, see Kate Winskell, "Dada, Russia and Modernity, 1915–1922" (PhD diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1995).

11 George Grosz, "Zu meinen neuen Bilder," written November 1920, published in *Das Kunstblatt* in January 1921, republished as "On My New Paintings" in *The Berlin of George Grosz: Drawings, Watercolours, and Prints*, exhibition catalog, ed. Frank Whitford (London: Royal Academy of Art, 1997), 36.

12 Ibid.

13 George Grosz, "Statt einer Biographie," written August 16, published in *Der Gegner* 2, no. 3 (1920): 68–69.

14 Grosz, "Zu meinen neuen Bildern," 36.

15 The words *Propaganda* and *Werbung* were both used to mean advertising, and frequently treated as interchangeable. For an in-depth discussion of these terms, see Sabine Kriebel, "Photomontage in the Year 1932: John Heartfield and the National Socialists," *Oxford Art Journal* 31, no. 1 (March 2008): 97–127.

16 Erwin Piscator, *The Political Theater*, trans. Hugh Rorrison (New York: Avon Books, 1963), 49.

17 At this same time, Heartfield was also producing stage sets for Berlin's Reinhardt Theater and, as he maintained at the time, for the Deutsches Theater.

18 Piscator, *Political Theater*, 14–15, and Wieland Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield, Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen oder Die Macht der Freundschaft,"

Sinn und Form 6 (1971); reprinted in Herzfelde, *Zur Sache. Geschrieben und gesprochen zwischen 18 und 80* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1976), 443.

19 Recounted in the full article, Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield," 430–67.

20 See "Programmheft des proletarischen Theaters," *Der Gegner* 2, no. 4 (1920): 87–122.

21 See Gertrud Alexander, "Proletarisches Theater und der Gegner," *Die rote Fahne*, no. 210 (October 21, 1920); reprinted in Brauneck, *Die rote Fahne*, 96–98.

22 This synopsis is drawn from Walter Fähnders and Martin Rector, *Linksradikalismus und Literatur. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der sozialistischen Literatur in der Weimarer Republik* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1974), 96–107.

23 Alexandre Bogdanov, *Die Kunst und das Proletariat* (Leipzig: Kentaur, 1919).

24 Piscator, *Political Theater*, 37–38.

25 Proletarisches Theater manifesto, *Der Gegner* 2, no. 4 (1920): 90–93; translated in Piscator, *Political Theater*, 45–47.

26 A footnote in Piscator's *Political Theater* reads as follows: "At Piscator's request, Janos (Lajos) Barta wrote *Russia's Day* in German (of which he had an imperfect command) in five days. Piscator's collective then reworked it, with the author's agreement, and inserted allusions to the current German situation." Ibid., 48.

27 Piscator, *Political Theater*, 38. Here I have slightly adapted the English translation from the German.

28 Ibid., 39.

29 See *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Sektion der Kommunistischen Internationale). Berlin vom 12. bis 17. Juli 1925*, ed. Zentralkomitee der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands, 683–84 (Berlin: Vereinigung Internationaler Verlagsanstalten, 1925).

30 See Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

31 See Franz Wilhelm Siewert, as quoted in Fähnders and Rector, *Linksradikalismus*, 142.

32 *Rote Fahne*, April 12, 1921; translated in Piscator, *Political Theater*, 54.

33 Piscator, *Political Theater*, 39.

34 Wieland Herzfelde, "Rußlands Tag—Eine Art Vorspiel," in *Neue Deutsche Literatur* no. 2 (1957), republished in Hauberg, de Siati, and Ziemke, *Der Malik-Verlag*, 49.

35 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (New York: Verso, 2009). I base this reading in part on the work of Brigitte Peucker. See Peucker, "The Fascist Choreography: Riefenstahl's Tableaux," *Modernism/Modernity* 11, no. 2 (2004): 279–97.

36 Anonymous (Gertrud Alexander), "Proletarisches Theater," *Die rote Fahne* (October 17, 1920); reprinted in Brauneck, *Die rote Fahne*, 94–95.

37 The exhibition was sponsored by the Kunstlerhilfe (Artist Aid), which was part of the Internationale Arbeiterhilfe (International Worker Aid), led by Soviet-sponsored propagandist and publisher Willi Münzenberg. The show, which opened on October 10, 1924, was curated by painter Otto Nagel, who remained close to the Internationale Arbeiterhilfe through the Weimar period. For more on this exhibition, including reactions from the People's Commissar of Enlightenment, Anatoly Lunacharsky, and other Russian observers, see "Materialien," in *Wem gehört die Welt. Kunst und Gesellschaft in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, 1977), 242–46.

38 Some of these reviews are reprinted in the "Materialien" section of *Wem gehört die Welt*.

39 On Agitprop and the KPD, see W. L. Guttsman, "Agitation and Art: The Press," in his *Art for the Workers: Ideology and the Visual Art in Weimar Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 98–114. See also Herald Olbrich, *Proletarische Kunst im Werden* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1986). I have read the instructional booklets produced starting in 1923 by this department; they demonstrate a very high level of aesthetic sophistication. See FBS 282/12735 = I 3/1-2/96: Agitations- und Propagandatätigkeit

1923–1929, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

40 Alexander, "Dada. Ausstellung."

41 Colonna Film contract, signed October 26, 1921, folder 180, George Grosz Archive, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. According to further correspondence that runs into 1922, the men failed to complete the film because they remained too busy working on other projects to devote the time necessary for the painstaking animation. See folders 177–79, George Grosz Archive.

42 The short documentary, dating to 1920–1921, was made with the cameraman Karl Boesner for Ufa's Kulturfilmabteilung, or commercial film department, which Heartfield later claimed to have led in these early years. The film is currently *gesperrt*, held inaccessible, at a film archive in Stuttgart. But Jeanpaul Goergen screened it in the early 1990s and reports that it is entirely standard in its live-action execution. Based on discussion of this author with Goergen, September 2006.

43 According to Heartfield's job description on the Colonna Film contract, folder 180, George Grosz Archive.

44 See *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI. Parteitags der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Sektion der Kommmunistischen Internationale). Essen vom 2. bis 7. März 1927*, ed. Zentralkomitee der Kommunis-tischen Partei Deutschlands, 418 (Berlin: Vereinigung Internationaler Verlagsanstalten, 1927). For a discussion of this controversy, see Guttsman, *Art for the Workers*, 103–4.

45 These seven published plays were Franz Jung, *Die Kanaker* and *Wie lange noch* (in one volume); Xaver Stadelmann (pseudonym for Heinrich Stadelmann), *Freiei Bahn dem Tüchtigen*; Erich Mühsam, *Judas*; Karl August Wittfogel, *Rote Soldaten*; Upton Sinclair, *Die Machine*; and Felix Gasbarra, *Preussische Walpurgisnacht*. See a list of the projected plays in "An die Freunde und Mitglieder des Proletarisches Theaters," *Kommunistische Arbeiter-Zeitung* 2, no. 209 (1921): n.p.; reprinted in Hauberg, de Siati, and Ziemke, *Der Malik-Verlag*, 49–50. Piscator also lists some of the performed plays in *Political Theater*, 50.

46 See Wieland Herzfelde, "Ein Verlagsprogram" (1922); reprinted in Hauberg, de Siati, and Ziemke, *Der Malik-Verlag*, 52.

47 Herzfelde says almost precisely this in the fourth section of his short book *Gesellschaft, Künstler und Kommunismus* (Berlin, Malik Verlag, 1921); reprinted in Herzfelde, *Zur Sache*, 54–91.

48 Lukács came to Malik's attention through its other principal director in these early years, Julian Gumperz. In the summer of 1922, Gumperz participated in a conference entitled "Die erste Marxistische Arbeitswoche" (The First Marxist Working Week), at which Lukács, another of the participants, likely gave the first full outlines of his study. Gumperz would go on to become an assistant at the Frankfurt-based Institute for Social Research.

49 Relevant correspondence between Malik, the KPD, and Moscow's Communist International can be found in file 75, Wieland Herzfelde Archive.

50 For a detailed discussion of Weimar Germany's early splinter parties, see Ben Fowkes, *Communism in Germany under the Weimar Republic* (London: Macmillan, 1984).

51 Lilly Becher, "Beseelt von unserer Sprache: Zur Heartfield-Ausstellung, Deutsche Akademie der Künste, Berlin September 1957," in Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 345.

52 Heartfield had worked as a designer at Mannheim's Gebrüder Bauer paper-packaging plant. On the relation between his book covers, packaging design, and advertising, see Rolf Sachsse, "Mit das Beste auf dem Gebiet der Reklame—Fotomontage," in *John Heartfield*, exhibition catalog, ed. Peter Pachnicke and Klaus Honnef (Berlin: Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, 1991), 266–73.

53 Adolf Behne, "Künstler des Proletariats," *Eulenspiegel* 5, no. 6 (June 1931), 95; reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 186.

54 Peter Panter (Kurt Tucholsky), "Auf dem Nachttisch," in Kurt Tucholsky, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3, ed. Mary Gerold-Tucholsky and Fritz J. Raddatz (Reinbeck: Rowohlt Verlag, 1960), 1004.

55 Zur Mühlen's full name at birth was Hermine Isabelle Maria Gräfin Folliot de Crenneville. See Manfred Altner, *Hermynia Zur Mühlen: Eine Bibliographie* (Bern: Lang, 1997). For more on her professional relationship with Sinclair and his success in Germany, see the fascinating correspondence between zur Mühlen, Sinclair, and Herzfelde in *Werter Genosse, die Maliks haben beschlossen . . .*, ed. Walter Grünzweig and Susanne Schulz (Bonn: Weidle, 2001).

56 Upton Sinclair, *100%: The Story of a Patriot*, http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etexto4/strpt10.txt. See section 63.

57 Tucholsky, "Auf dem Nachttisch," 1004.

58 Heinz Rasch and Budo Rasch, *Gefesselter Blick. 25 kurze Monografien und Beiträge über neue Werbegestaltung* (Stuttgart: Zaugg, 1930), 53; reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 185.

59 Hans Reimann, "Heartfield und der Buchumschlag," *Das Stachelschwein* 4, no. 6 (June 1927): 40; reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 233.

60 For a thoughtful discusson on the film still and the larger relationship between photography and cinema, see David Campany, *Photograpy and Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008). Two additional and highly useful studies are Karen Beckman and Jean Ma, eds., *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), and Damian Sutton, *Photography, Cinema, Memory: The Crystal Image of Time* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

61 The word *Standfoto* suggests a studied pose or conscious halting of action enacted for the camera. This implication of performance, made outside the filming by a directorial team, is a resonance in German that does not arise from the English term "film still."

62 Eugen Heilig (1892–1975) was one of the Weimar period's best known "worker photographers." The worker photography movement focused its cameras on the life of Germany's working poor, a subject largely ignored by the commercial press agencies that supplied the country's newspapers and magazines with images. At best, the movement sought to have the working poor take images of their own lives. Heilig took this photograph, *The Cinema Comes to the Village*, in 1927 during a tour of the Soviet Union. For a full study on the worker photography movement (the cover of which is graced by this same photograph), see Jorge Ribera, ed., *The Worker Photography Movement, 1926–1939* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2011).

63 Herzfelde decided to entitle this book "The Swamp" in German, rather than directly translating the English title.

64 The two men were scheduled to be executed at midnight, August 15, 1927, at the Charlestown State Prison.

65 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 44.

66 See Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), esp. chap. 4, "The Display Window: Designs and Desires of Weimar Consumerism."

67 On the avant-garde's role in Germany's interwar consumer economy, see Maud Lavin, *Clean New Word: Culture, Politics, and Graphic Design* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001). See also Heidrun Schröder-Kehler, "Künstler erobern die Warenwelt. Neue Typographie in der Werbegestaltung," in *Wechsel Wirkungen. Ungarische Avantgarde in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Herbertus Gassner, 388–419 (Kiel: Neue Galerie, 1986).

68 Ward's analysis of this scene in her discussion of shop windows revolves around the psychopathic murderer as much as the endangered consumer. The film's appearance at the end of the era demonstrates, she writes, "the collapse of the value system of Weimar visual culture from within a killer's mind." See Ward, *Weimar Surfaces*, 234.

69 Friedrich Reinecke, *Das gute Buchfenster* (Leipzig: Verlag des Börsenvereins der deutschen Buchhändler, 1926), 12–14.

70 Ibid., 27.

71 Ibid., 28.

72 Additional designers from the second half of the decade are discussed in the epilogue.

73 See Anthony Slide, *Early American Cinema* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 218.

74 Don MacKenzie, "The Life of a Stillman," *International Photographer* 6, no. 2 (February 1934): 22; quoted from Steven Jacobs's thoroughly researched article "The History and Aesthetics of the Classical Film Still," *History of Photography* 34, no. 4 (November 2010). MacKenzie's larger statement reveals a great deal about the process and difficulty of making a film still: "The director and the actors have had a hard time shooting the scene. However, after eight or ten minutes the director is satisfied. It is now twelve-thirty and everyone is hungry. The stillman hollers: 'Hold it for the still!' The director goes to lunch, the actors give the stillman disgusted looks. The gaffer, and in fact all the electricians, give him a dirty look and the assistant director glances uncertainly from stillman to actors and finally 'compromises' by promising the stillman that he can have the desired shot right after lunch." As MacKenzie explains, the shot is thus lost.

75 Some of these alterations, such as the puddling of the cape, were made to have this still resemble artist Aubrey Beardsley's drawing *The Peacock Skirt*, from his series *Salomé* (1893). These images accompanied the printed edition of Oscar Wilde's play of the same name, and they heavily inspired director Charles Bryant's costumes and cinematography for the film.

76 The lighting also had to navigate the danger of overreporting flaws in makeup or costume that the movie camera could not record. See the section "Staging and Details" in Jacobs, "Classic Film Still," 378–80. Another sharp analysis of the film still and detail can be found in David Company, "Once More for Stills," in *Paper Dreams: The Lost Art of Hollywood Still Photography*, ed. Christoph Schifferli (Paris: Edition 7L, 2007), 7–13.

77 Alois Martin Müller, "Prototypes and After-Images," in *Film Stills: Emotions Made in Hollywood*, ed. Annemarie Hürlimann and Alois Martin Müller (Zurich: Museum für Gestaltung), 19–20.

78 Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning," in *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 65–68. A useful discussion of Barthes's essay in relation to early American film publicity can be found in Thomas Stubblefield, "Disassembling the Cinema: The Poster, the Film, and In-Between," *Thresholds* 34 (2007): 84–88, 94–95. It is important to note that Barthes based his essay on an analysis of frames taken from a film by Sergei Eisenstein rather than actual film stills.

79 Victor Burgin has written that this cinematic material "spills" the film's "contents into the stream of everyday life, where they join other detritus of everyday experience." The cinematic, that is, becomes portable and migrates into noncinematic venues such as the street or magazines. But it also bleeds into other media, such as photography, and transforms their practice, as well as the expectations brought to them. See Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 12.

80 Some of these shots were likely taken by an assistant or friend of Reismann's, given that he appears in a few of the pictures.

81 The men posing on the scaffolding were Reismann, Paul Urban, and Hans Franke, the head of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft and former director of Malik Verlag. See "1929," März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 582. For Herzfelde's description of Heartfield's direction of this event, see Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 46. Reismann describes this shoot as well in "Heartfield und der Buchumschlag," in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 244–45.

82 János Reismann (pseud. Wolf Reiss), "Als ich mit John Heartfield zusammenarbeitete"; reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt,* 188–91. Excerpted and modified from *John Heartfield*, exhibition catalog, ed. Peter Pachnicke and Klaus Honnef (New York: Museum of Modern Art/Abrams, 1992), 114.

83 Here I draw from George Baker, "Photography between Narrativity and Stasis: August Sander, Degeneration, and the Decay of the

Portrait," *October*, no. 76 (Spring 1996), 72–113.

84 Herbert Frankel, "John Heartfield und seine photographisch-graphischen Arbeiten," in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 231.

85 Reimann, "Heartfield und der Buchumschlag," 232.

86 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 44.

87 Among the first books Heartfield covered front and back with photographs were Upton Sinclair's *Jimmy Higgins* and *Samuel der Suchende* (*Samuel the Seeker*), and Malik's *Platz dem Arbeiter!* (*A Place for the Worker!*; fig. 6.19), all from 1924. In the case of *Jimmy Higgins*, Heartfield printed the same photograph on the front and back cover; with *Samuel der Suchende* he used two separate pictures. In these cases the spine remained free of photography. Heartfield began covering the entire book with a single photograph that same year with *Der Sumpf* (plate 5) and *Nach der Sintflut* (*Millennium*, 1925; fig. 4.11). Subsequent designs, such as that for Sinclair's *Metropolis* (1925; fig. 6.14), soon followed.

88 For a discussion covering the intellectual history of "dialectical photomontage," see Hubertus Gaßner, "Heartfield's Moscow Apprenticeship 1931–1932," in Pachnicke and Honnef, *John Heartfield* (New York), 256–89.

89 Herzfelde, *John Heartfield*, 45.

90 Ibid., 42–56.

91 Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography," in *The Mass Ornament. Weimar Essays*, trans. and ed. Thomas Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 47.

92 Tret'iakov, *John Heartfield*, trans. Devin Fore, n.p. Fore has suggested to me that this term may be Tret'iakov's critical riff on Moholy-Nagy's "new vision."

93 Kracauer, "Photography," 50–51.

94 Ibid., 52.

95 Leah Dickerman, "Camera Obscura: Socialist Realism in the Shadow of Photography," *October*, no. 93 (Summer 2000), 143.

96 Thy Phu and Linda Steer, "Introduction," *Photography and Culture* 2, no. 3 (November 2009): 236.

EPILOGUE

1 For an excellent exhibition catalog that covers these and many other designers, see Heiko Schmidt and Christian Bartsch, *Buchgestaltung linker Verlage in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Rotes Antiquariat), 2004. See also Horst Bunke and Hans Stern, *Buchgestaltung für die Literatur der Arbeiterklasse 1918–1933* (Leipzig: Deutsche Bücherei, 1982).

2 For a thorough discussion of this migration to Czechoslovakia and of the country's own laboratory of inventive, photo-based book design, see Jindrich Toman, *Foto/montáz tiskem = Photo/Montage in Print* (Prague: Kant, 2009). On the *Fotoeinband*, see Jan Tschichold, *Die Neue Typographie. Ein Handbuch für Zeitgemäss Schaffende* (Berlin: Verlag des Bildungsverb. der deutschen Buchdrucker, 1928); reprinted in März and Heartfield, *Der Schnitt*, 233.

3 This manifesto of the Red Group is reprinted in *John Heartfield. Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit. Selbstzeugnisse, Erinnerungen, Interpretationen*, ed. Roland März and Gertrud Heartfield (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1981), 131–33.

4 See Elisabeth Patzwall, "Zur Rekonstruktion des Heartfield-Raums der Werkbundausstellung von 1929," in *John Heartfield*, ed. Peter Pachnicke and Klaus Honnef (Berlin: Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, 1991), 294–97.

5 Alfred Kemény, "Photomontage as a Weapon in the Class Struggle," in *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913–1940*, ed. Christopher Phillips (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art/Aperture, 1989), 205.

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Urlaute	Jeanpaul Goergen, ed. *Urlaute der dadaistischer Poesie. Der Berliner Dada-Abend am 12. April 1918*. Hanover: Postskriptum Verlag, 1994.

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